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THE ARTHURIAN SOCIETY AND THE COURTLY VALUES AS REPRESENTED
IN HARTMANN VON AUE'S EREC AND IWEIN

by

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A THESIS

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled The Arthurian Society and the Courtly Values as Represented in Hartmann von Aue's Erec and Iwein submitted by Gertrud Jaron Lewis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

ABSTRACT

The project of this essay is to investigate the Arthurian society and the courtly values as they are represented in Hartmann von Aue's Erec and Iwein. The method followed is that of a close textual study of Hartmann's courtly epics. Hartmann's works are here taken as autonomous works of art and as aesthetically independent pieces of literature.

The first chapter deals with the Arthurian Court and its representatives. The various text interpretations reveal a pleasurable but static life at the ideal but narrowly limited Court. The courtly setting and its values are criticized implicitly as the text makes clear. And, moreover, an ironic view of both King Arthur and the Round Table society cannot be overlooked.

Irony and humour are similarly the findings of the second chapter that deals with the Arthurian Knight's image as it is shown in Hartmann's works. Keii is seen as the keeper of the chivalrous standards by means of his sharp tongue. Gawein, although supposed to be perfect, is not without serious flaws. Erec and Iwein, neither of them perfect at the outset, develop into the most accomplished paragons of knighthood. It must be taken into account, however, that both heroes finally move away from the Arthurian Court. Only by integrating the outside world, that is, by stepping beyond the limited boundaries of the Arthurian chivalry, have they become perfect knights. Their achievement implicitly criticizes the lack of perfection in the Arthurian Knight.

The third chapter interprets some passages of Erec and Iwein where the narrator intrudes on the scene as the fictitious Hartmann arguing or defending his cause. It becomes clear that this device is used as a means of parody. The narrator is seen to dissociate himself mockingly from the courtly value of Minne and its contents.

This study, then, shows that irony and parody, often in a humorous manner, sometimes rather severely, are used as methods of implied criticism of the Arthurian world in Hartmann's courtly epics.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Literary criticism has usually associated Hartmann von Aue's work with the term "mâze." As recently as 1962, Peter Wapnewski speaks of Hartmann "als der wortgewordenen Verwirklichung schlechthin der höfischen Kardinaltugend 'mâze' . . . ,"¹ or Hans H. Glunz in his Literaturästhetik des europäischen Mittelalters, 1963, states: "Das Leben auf ein Mittel, auf die mâze einzustellen, . . . das war der Gehalt von Hartmanns Erec und Iwein."² This consensus has been so strong that often Hartmann's work was evaluated according to whether he does or does not conform with this ideal of "mâze." Thus any work of his that failed to meet the superimposed demands of such a preconceived notion had to be considered less valuable than another more "moderate" one, as the following statement by M.F. Richey will show: "One criticism must be made. There is no denying that Hartmann utterly forsakes his ideal of mâze once his love of rhetoric gets the upper hand. Then even his best creations suffer."³ If it becomes necessary to condemn a poet's "love of rhetoric" in order to keep the adopted image of his overall moderation, then part of his work is bound to be neglected.

This essay does not attempt to dispute the notion of "mâze" as applied to Hartmann. It does, however, intend to avoid this term in order

¹Hartmann von Aue (Stuttgart, 1962), p. 26.

²(Frankfurt/Main, 1963), p. 75.

³"Die edeln armen: A Study of Hartmann von Aue," London Medieval Studies, I (1938), p. 274.

to be able to approach the text of the works themselves with as few pre-conceptions as possible. Why, it may be asked for instance, should not abundant rhetoric be a functional part that is integrated into the total work?

The two works selected for this study are the courtly epics Erec and Iwein. The basic knowledge of the works is presupposed so that no initial account of the contents will be given. Rather, crucial text passages will be studied closely as to their precise formulation, rhetorical figures, functions within their contexts and connections to other related passages. The image of King Arthur and his courtly society will be investigated in the first chapter. For that purpose, the wider tradition of the Arthurian legend in general is of little avail since only Hartmann's text will be interpreted in order to find out what the Arthurian Court looks like as represented in Erec and Iwein. Similarly, the second chapter will abstain from the traditional image of the Knight of the Round Table; it will concentrate on the knights, especially on Erec and Iwein, as they are shown in Hartmann's works through direct statements and through the descriptions of their adventures and of their reactions to the imaginary world of the Arthurian epic. A third short chapter will study some passages of direct narrator interruptions and it will attempt to see their functions.

The task this essay proposes does make one assumption: Erec and Iwein each represent an "autonomous work of art."⁴ Hugh Sacker explains

⁴ Hugh Sacker, "An Interpretation of Hartmann's Iwein," Germanic Review, XXXVI (1961), 25.

that "medieval scholars have been strangely reluctant to make" this assumption,⁵ but recent criticism has seen less dependence of Hartmann on his sources than was usually believed. Hendricus Sparnaay as early as 1938, in comparing Hartmann with Chrétien, states decidedly that their works are of a different character.⁶ Friedrich Maurer abandons the term translation for the sake of "schöpferische" adaptation and he finds that Hartmann accents more strongly "die innere Problematik" of his works.⁷ Necessarily the scholars cited compared the German works with their French counterparts to come to these results; but since they established Hartmann's aesthetic independence no further comparison is needed. In this essay, therefore, Hartmann's Erec and Iwein will be treated independently, with only one exception: for relevant passages interpreted here a crosscheck with Chrétien's Erec et Enide and Yvain will try to establish which parts of Hartmann's text were changed or perhaps even added to his sources. The Chrétien criticism has been left altogether untouched; Chrétien--for the purposes of this paper--is only relevant in so far as his work helps elucidate Hartmann's courtly epics.

In approaching the text of Erec and Iwein with critical awareness for any possibilities that offer themselves but with as few preconceived notions about Hartmann's work as possible, it is hoped that the aesthetic experience of such an investigation will be worthwhile. Humphrey Milnes

⁵Ibid.

⁶Hartmann von Aue (Halle, 1933-38), II, .

⁷"Hartmann von Aue," Die grossen Deutschen, V (1957), 52.

states concerning Hartmann's Iwein: "Underneath the even surface Hartmann weaves into his Iwein more significant critical experience than he is usually given credit for."⁸ It remains to be seen what the present approach will yield.

⁸"The Play of Opposites in Iwein," German Life and Letters, XIV (1960/61), 255.

II. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE ARTHURIAN COURT

The Arthurian Court forms the structural framework for Hartmann's Erec and Iwein. Both at the beginning and at the end of these courtly epics, as well as at some crucial point in the middle of the work, the hero is present at the Court. It is his point of departure and the place of his successful return. Because of this obvious pattern, the Arthurian Court gains an eminent place in these works.

This chapter will investigate the image of the Court as given in Hartmann's epics. The study centers on the text passages describing the Arthurian society directly. Indirect references to Arthur and his Court, such as given through related events or actions of the hero, will also be considered in order to obtain a full picture.

1. Erec

A minor incident at the opening of Hartmann's Erec conveys the immediate impression of some peculiarity of the Arthurian society. Erec accompanies Queen Ginover and her ladies when they encounter on their way a knight with his lady and a dwarf. The Queen is eager to find out the strangers' identity and the two groups clash; nothing more actually happens. Only the description of this passage reveals an insight into the reason for this unfortunate event. A noble lady, and later Erec, approach the strangers "mit zühten"¹ to ask them who they

¹ Hartmann von Aue, Erec. Ed. Albert Leitzmann. (Tübingen, 1963), line 31, and cf. also ll. 36, and 79. Subsequent references to this work will appear in the text of the paper as Erec.

are. But the dwarf acting for his lord rebukes their polite question: "daz getweroc sprach: 'lâ dîn klaffen sîn . . .'" (Erec 83) and "Mit der geisel ez in sluoc" (Erec 97 and 54). Rude language and very insulting behavior (later specifically referred to as "unzuht," Erec 1242) is the only response the Queen receives. The Queen's attempt to establish contact with the outside world, as represented in these strangers, has failed. The courtly language is not properly understood nor is the courtly etiquette honored. This emphasis of "zuht" versus "unzuht" marks the discrepancy that exists between the Arthurian society and the world outside the Court. It is a feature which Hartmann introduces into the epic at this point. In Chrétien's Erec et Enide, in contrast, both the noble lady and Erec behave very rudely themselves in response to the dwarf.² The scene in Hartmann's Erec further suggests that the obvious lack of communication between the two groups mentioned here indicates a confinement of the Arthurian world to its own boundaries.

King Arthur himself is introduced into the work while he is described as deer-hunting (Erec 1098ff). Yet no emphasis is given to the colorful description of a hunting scene (as, for instance, in the Nibelungenlied, stanzas 929-62). The stress is laid on the discussion of the successful hunter's right to embrace a beautiful lady. The key word to this passage is "reht" (Erec 1107, 1114, 1115, and later 1144), that is the King's legal right to pleasure. The phrasing

2

Chrétien de Troyes, Erec et Enide. Ed. Mario Roques. In: Les Romans, vol. I (Paris, 1955), lines 175ff and 213ff. Subsequent references to this work will appear in the text simply as Erec et Enide.

"sîn reht nâch der gewonheit" (Erec 1114) suggests this habit as a usual royal pastime for generations. Ginover certainly does not debate this right, but she asks him to wait: "nû bît niuwan unz morgen vruo" (Erec 1148 and similarly 1117). Arthur thus becomes inactive. This scene leaves the impression that life at the Arthurian Court is pleasant but static, and it will become obvious in the following chapter that only in leaving the Court do Erec and Iwein undergo a development. The structural arrangement in Hartmann's Erec in placing this scene after Erec's fight offers smoother transitions than Erec et Enide does. The accents of this scene in the two works are placed quite differently: "la costume del cerf" (Erec et Enide 290) is argued by the knights in Chrétien's work where each one claims his lady as the fairest; the King's right for pleasure in Hartmann's Erec, on the other hand, is undebated. Thus the dynamic scene in Chrétien makes room for a static scene in Hartmann revealing how the knights rely on the given conventions, not even questioning them.

When Iders and his company arrive at Karadigan to report the news of Erec's victory in their fight, the reaction of the courtly society about Erec's success is described as follows:

von disen maeren wurden dô
vil herzenlîche vrô
Artûs und diu kûnegîn
und lobetens unsern trehtîn,
daz im alsô jungen
sô schône was gelungen
und im sîn êrstiu ritterschaft
mit lobelîcher heiles kraft
iedoch alsô gar ergie:
wan er begundes vor nie.
oder ez waere
gar ein nîdaere,
sô truoc im dâ niemen haz.

ez wart nie man geminnet baz
 von einem ingesinde,
 wan er hetez von kinde
 umbe si gedienet sô
 daz si des alle wâren vrô (Erec 1260-1277).

Actually all these lines contain only variations on one theme: they were all glad about Erec. Yet a closer look at the passage may reveal some function in this abundance of words: Lines 1261 and 1277 give the theme "vrô." The second point made is the unanimity of the entire Court in their praise and love of Erec. Arthur and the Queen were glad and praised him, and nobody there hated him. Rather he was loved "von einem ingesinde," and they all were glad. And finally, they are especially glad because from his early childhood he has been with them. Thus the tradition of belonging to the Arthurian society plays an important rôle in their showing complacency. The long passage quoted--Chrétien has just four lines with the theme of love and joy (Erec et Enide 1515-18)--may have the function of representing the circle of the courtly society as unanimous in their happiness about their knight's success.

The official expression of their joy is given in King Arthur's order (Erec 1285-92) to welcome Erec in adequately courtly manner (cf. here the emphasis on "suln"--1286, 1288, 1292--which stresses the official tone). Arthur is here quoted as speaking for the first time, and he does so in an official function. On two more occasions (Erec 1510-22 and 2064-72) Arthur is characterized as the official representative of the Court. The emphasis on the ceremonial function of Arthur at the expense of drawing a lively character is obvious in Hartmann's epic. Any spontaneous active features that Chrétien's work

contains (cf. Erec and Enide 1525-28, for example in this context) are tuned down in Erec.

Seen from this perspective, the long scene of the "tavelrunde" (Erec 1611-1805) may gain some interest. Although it is to be expected to describe people sitting at a table, the constant repetition of some form of "sitzen" stresses the complete inactivity of one hundred and forty knights, and leads up successfully to the high point of the scene when the King finally stands up in order to bestow the kiss. The inverted sentence form here gives special emphasis to the verb:

ûf stuont der künec dâ:
sin reht nam er sâ
von sînes neven vriundîn (Erec 1792-94).

The "reht" referred to is, of course, the right to kiss Enite and, ironically, to claim this right, but not to perform some important royal or chivalrous function Arthur loses some of his wonted lethargy. If this passage is related to Erec's characteristic up-standing at Limors, which will be studied in the next chapter, the irony here becomes still more apparent because of the discrepancy in the tasks to be performed. A comparison with this passage in Chrétien (Erec et Enide 1733-96) shows that over sixty lines of a lively scene including a long speech by Arthur were condensed into three lines in Erec.

The remaining scenes in Erec in which Arthur is described directly (cf. Erec 1797ff, 1887ff, 2064ff, 2114ff, 2368ff, 2852ff) do not add anything new to the image we have gained so far: the King in his official functions and as the center of a placid pleasurable life at his Court. Chrétien's spontaneous and lively king figure (cf.

especially Erec et Enide 2006ff) is quite remote from the representative courtly King in Erec.

Arthur and his Court are seen in a different light during their encounter with Erec in the middle of the epic (Erec 4629-5287). Erec has just won a difficult fight (with Guivreiz) and hurries on to seek for more adventure. He still "berunnen was mit bluote" (Erec 4629³⁵) when he enters the forest where King Arthur happens to be hunting at the same time. First Keiion his own initiative, and later Gawein on the King's explicit wish, try to persuade Erec there to join the Court. Erec rejects the invitation; he has to continue his journey, and he explains:

waerez an mîner muoze,
nâch des kûneges gruoze
vüere ich tûsent mîle.
ir sult mich ze dirre wîle
mîne strâze lâzen varn (Erec 4672-76).

Erec is not ready to confront Arthur. "In dem Zustand, in dem er sich befindet . . . , passt Erec nicht hinein in die Welt der Freude," Ernst Scheunemann states.³ And, moreover, this is not the time for "muoze" for Erec; he cannot afford the leisure time in comfort and pleasure that the Arthurian Court stands for. Gawein's language in trying to convince Erec to see the King if he has any respect for him at all, is strong (Erec 4949ff) but still Erec replies negatively:

³ Artushof und Abenteuer (Breslau, 1937), p. 72.

ich hân ze disen zîten
gemaches mich bewegen gar (Erec 4977/78).

Erec has to fulfill his own important tasks, he must avoid an enjoyable rest offered to him at the courtly setting. Finally, when Arthur and his company, on Gawein's advice, trick Erec into encountering them (Erec 4987ff), Erec is outraged.⁴ The repetitive lines given below follow in a very short sequence:

niht liebes im dar an geschah . . . (Erec 5039)
ir enhabet niht wol an mir getân . . . (Erec 5045
and 5067)
ir habet mih übele her brâht . . . (Erec 5051).

The cause for Erec's anger is a question of principle:

swer ze hove wesen sol,
dem gezimet vreude wol
und daz er im sîn reht tuo:
dâ enkan ich nû niht zuo
und muoz mich sûmen dar an
als ein unvarnder man.
ir sehet wol deich ze dirre stunt
bin müede unde wunt
und sô unhovebaere
daz ich wol hoves enbaere,
hetet ir es mich erlân (Erec 5056-67).

Erec's view of the Arthurian Court adds an important facet to the image obtained so far since he, an Arthurian knight himself, now sees the Court as an outsider from a more or less objective distance. Arthur's Court is equated with pleasure and therefore inaccessible at this time for the sore wanderer Erec; he must not be "unhovebaere"

⁴Scheunemann, p. 72: "Der Unwille Erecs über die List ist Hartmanns Zutat."

in order to be acceptable at Court. The Arthurian Court, then, is only fit for a leisurely knight who can enjoy the high-strung pleasure life. Since Erec is engaged in some serious struggle for his existence he is misplaced in this setting as he proves with his almost immediate departure. He leaves against Arthur's will ("diz dühte si alle misse-tân," Erec 5273).⁵ In fact, his rapid departure spoils the King's pleasure so that he breaks up his hunt (Erec 5284ff). This scene must not be interpreted as Erec's rejection of the Arthurian Court. For only a few hundred lines later Erec is found sending Cadoc to the Queen so that she may console him in his utter distress. And here he declares the Arthurian Court as the standard for any knight (cf. Erec 5676-5709).⁶ His reaction, as seen above, is rather to be understood as his putting the Court into its proper place. It remains the ideal frame of reference even for the fighting knight. But while engaged in serious fighting Erec finds himself so much an outsider of this closed society that he calls himself uncourtly, not able to enter the tight circle of the Arthurian Court reserved for a relaxed holiday mood only. As such, this scene does have a definite function and does not merely represent

⁵ By suggesting two different standards for Arthur and Erec, Hans Eggers shows how far Erec has actually moved away from the Court: "In der Mitte seines Weges ist Erec äusserlich bereits rehabilitiert. Das kommt symbolisch darin zum Ausdruck, dass Artus sich auf alle Weise bemüht, ihn an seinen Hof zu ziehen Sein (Erecs) eigenes Gewissen, schliesst ihn davon aus." (Symmetrie und Proportion epischen Erzählens: Studien zur Kunstform Hartmanns von Aue, Stuttgart, 1956, p. 62.)

⁶ Cf. also Scheunemann, p. 117.

an "épisode de pur ornament," as Gaston Paris called it.⁷ The fact that Chrétien's work does not contain any of the points stressed here, adds even more weight to the scene.

The Arthurian Court finally is the point of successful return for Erec as the highly honored knight. He brings with him the unhappy group of eighty suffering women who will find refuge in the courtly society after Erec freed them in his last adventure. Here at the end Arthur thanks Erec for his great deeds and he blesses him in a ceremonial way in the following speech:

'Erec, lieber neve mîn,
dû solt von schulden immer sîn
geprîset unde gêret,
wan dû hâst wol gemêret
unsers hoves wünne.
swer dir niht guotes gûnne,
der enwerde nimmer mêre vrô.'
'âmen' jâhen si alle dô,
wan si im guotes gunden (Erec 9944-52).

The importance of Erec's accomplishments lies in his contribution to "unsers hoves wünne," as Arthur states it. He honors him while condemning those who do not wish him well. The unanimous "âmen" indicates the religious fervor with which everybody absorbs the King's words which he uttered "mit geradezu priesterlicher Würde."⁸ The last line quoted, however, adds a new shade of meaning to this scene: Arthur had just threatened those who do not wish Erec well that they should become unhappy forever. Thereupon they all agree with the King for--the reason

⁷Quoted by Sparnaay, Hartmann, I,

⁸Scheunemann, p. 102.

is carefully given--they did wish him well. Although the context leaves no doubt that the entire courtly society loves and admires Erec, there is at least a slight hint of irony on Arthur's priest-like function in the relation of the two statements (Erec 9950 and 9952).

Chrétien's epic shows instead the triumphant ceremony of Erec's coronation as high point and conclusion of the work. Earlier in Erec et Enide (6452ff) it is mentioned that after his father's death Erec will leave King Arthur. Yet the end of the work culminates in his celebrated presence at the Arthurian Court. Notably different, then, is the ending of Hartmann's Erec. "Die Einkehr bei der festlichen Tafelrunde ist auch diesmal nur Durchgang," says Julius Schwietering;⁹ for Erec has to depart again. "Die 'echte' Wirklichkeit" breaks in:¹⁰ King Lac's death makes it necessary for Erec to care for his own land and people (Erec 9968ff). Once again he leaves behind the carefree pleasure life of the courtly society and takes a quiet but decisive departure.

The tight structural framework of Chrétien's work, that is the Arthurian Court as the knight's starting point and as the welcoming haven for the successful knight at the final high point, is thus changed in Hartmann's epic. Erec's leaving the Arthurian society at the end after an apparently perfect return and his going home to his own kingdom, breaks open the firm structure of Hartmann's work. Or, as Hildegard Emmel states it in Formprobleme des Artusromans und der Gralsdichtung: "Während es Chrestien auf die Einheit des Artusromans ankam,

⁹Die deutsche Dichtung des Mittelalters (Darmstadt, 1957), p. 153.

¹⁰Petrus W. Tax, "Studien zum Symbolischen in Hartmanns Erec," Wirkendes Wort, XIII (1963), 287.

deren Geschlossenheit gerade durch das Ende am Artushof hervortritt, sprengt Hartmann die Form und lässt dadurch den Gehalt deutlicher hervortreten."¹¹ Avoiding the division Emmel makes, I would modify her statement as follows: by breaking the usual form of the Arthurian romance Hartmann's work achieved a different meaning; that is, it implicitly conveys a critical view of the Arthurian Court. Hugo Kuhn observes in one of his interpretations of Hartmann's works: "Schon der Erec dient nicht der Idealisierung, der Klärung höfischer Werte, sondern ihrer Kritik!"¹²

2. Iwein

The prologue of Hartmann's Iwein is a clear addition to Chrétien's Yvain.

Swër an rehte güete
wendet sîn gemüete,
dem volget saelde und êre.
des gît gewisse lêre
kûnec Artûs der guote,
der mit rîters muote
nâch lobe kunde strîten.
er hât bî sînen zîten
gelebet alsô schône
daz er der êren krône
dô truoc und noch sîn name treit.
des habent die wârheit
sîne lantliute:
sî jehent er lebe noch hiute:
er hât den lop erworben,
ist im der lîp erstorben,
sô lebt doch iemer sîn name.

¹¹(Bern, 1951), p. 44.

¹²"Hartmann von Aue als Dichter," Deutschunterricht, V, no. 2 (1953), 17.

er ist lasterlîcher schame
 iemer vil gar erwert,
 der noch nâch sînem site vert.¹³

The difficulty in interpreting the three opening lines has been acknowledged by the Hartmann criticism in general. One of the problems may be that "güete" here is not defined except as something the pursuit of which brings "saelde" and "êre." And--vice versa--"saelde" and "êre" are not defined except that they are the things that may be obtained if "güete" is strived for. What is made clear then is the interdependence of these values, and since they are interlocking they represent the image of a circle. As such the thematic description of the Court is reflected in the relation of the three terms in the opening lines of Iwein. For it will be found again in Iwein, as it was seen in Erec, that the Arthurian Court does represent a limited circle distinct from the reality of the outside world.

In the ensuing verses of the prologue, the figure of King Arthur is used to exemplify the initial statement. His attributes are "der guote," with a chivalrous heart, praiseworthy in his fighting--although he is never seen fighting--, with a good life and crowned with honors.¹⁴ Distance to this ideal figure is achieved through the expression "bî sînen zîten" and through the repetition of "sîn name" which makes the name rather than the person the bearer of the ideal

¹³ Hartmann von Aue, Iwein. Studienausgabe nach G.F. Benecke und K. Lachmann. (Berlin, 1965), lines 1-20. Subsequent references to this work will appear in the text of this paper as Iwein.

¹⁴ Concerning the image of Arthur in this prologue, Gustav Ehrismann explains: "Der Prolog . . . ist rein weltlich gerichtet, Artus ist nur ein Vertreter des höfisch-gesellschaftlichen Ritterideals." (Geschichte der deutschen Literatur bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters, München, 1927, II, 181.)

qualities. Further objectivity--"in der Form humorvoller Distanzierung," as Hans Fromm sees it¹⁵--is obtained through "sî jehent" and the following subjunctive form. The introduction of Iwein, therefore, makes the point that the question of Arthur's real personal life is irrelevant. Important only is the image created around his name which is, however, of such a bearing that Arthur becomes the frame of reference for those striving for honor.

The Arthurian life corresponds with the Arthurian image. The tightly-woven passage (Iwein 31-47) about the Pentecost festival at Karidôl describes its exclusive character. The singularity of time (cf. "vordes noch sît" and "bî niemens zîten anderswâ") and of event ("in alle wîs ein wunschlebn") is stressed through the choice and repetition of adjectives: the initial "rîch" and "schoen" leading to the comparative "schoener" climax in the superlative "die schoensten von den rîchen." The use of language here reflects the achievement of the highest pleasure in the Arthurian way of life.

In specific contrast to the non-Arthurian life, as seen later in the epic, the courtly life consists of an ideal carefree pastime, "aus der Wirklichkeit von Ort und Zeit gelöst," as Helmut de Boor describes it.¹⁶ This separation from reality is underlined through a sequence of eight anaphoric lines (Iwein 65-72) that stick out from the surrounding verses in which the playful activities of the courtly society are enumerated. The mentioning of Keii immediately following

¹⁵ "Komik und Humor in der Dichtung des deutschen Mittelalters," Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift, XXXVI (1962), 333.

¹⁶ Geschichte der deutschen Literatur (München, 1960), II, .

(Iwein 74) flashes in a new perspective; for he is characterized contradicting the courtly behavior pattern: "ze gemache ân êre stuont sîn sin" (Iwein 76). One misfit, then, is among the members of this ideal society.

In the middle of the festive gathering at the Court, the King and Queen suddenly leave:

der künec und diu künegin
 die heten sich ouch under in
 ze handen gevangen
 und wâren gegangen
 in eine kemenâten dâ
 und heten sich slâfen sâ
 mē durch geselleschaft geleit
 dan durch deheine trâkheit
 sie entsliefen beidiu schiere (Iwein 77-85).

Especially stressed in these lines is their togetherness ("under in," "ze handen gevangen," "sâ") which forms an inner circle within the Arthurian society, secluded from the courtly gathering ("in eine kemenâten"), and finally even separated in the total seclusion of sleep. The royal sleep, as is specifically mentioned, has nothing in common with Keii's laziness; yet the suggested comparison (Iwein 84) and the given context throw some ironic light on Arthur and the Queen. For if the royal couple really were beyond criticism in this respect it would not be necessary nor appropriate to mention their lack of laziness which immediately recalls what has just been said about the misfit Keii.

Whereas Hartmann's work achieves an ironic effect implicitly through the parallel to Keii, Chrétien criticizes the King's withdrawal from the knights' perspective:

Mes cel jor mout s'esmerveillierent
 Del roi, qui d'antre aus se leva
 S'i ot de tes, cui mout greva
 Et qui mout grant parole an firent
 Por ce, que onques mes nel virent
 A si grant feste an chanbre antrer ¹⁷
 Por dormir ne por reposer . . .

The knights consider the King's sleep at this time unpardonable; they are openly annoyed with Arthur. His only excuse is that the Queen detained him there, the text continues.

The secluded inner circle of the royal couple is soon broken by Ginover who, hearing the knights talking, leaves the King quietly (Iwein 97ff and cf. also Yvain 61-66 for a very similar scene). The verbs used here, "stëln" (100) and "slîchen" (101), suggest a mild form of desertion on the part of the Queen; thus her action is slightly criticized entailing also a foreshadowing on her later abduction.

In the following scene Keii plays an important role, and the text itself contains a value judgment on his behavior:

do erzeicte aver Keiî
 sîn alte gewonheit:
 im was des mannes êre leit. . . (Iwein 108-110).

In a general way, these lines may mean that Keii, as usual (cf. Iwein 76), is opposed to honor. And this is how Chrétien presents him, as a malicious character with the derogatory attributes: ". . . ranposneus, / Fel et poignanz et afiteus," (Yvain 69-70). The context in Iwein, however, suggests that Keii objects to the exclusive honor "des mannes"

¹⁷ Chrétien de Troyes, Yvain. Ed. Wendelin Foerster. (Halle, 1912), lines 42-48. Subsequent references to this work will appear in the text of this paper as Yvain.

Kalogreant (cf. also Iwein 112). Kalogreant alone had seen the Queen arriving, had hurried to welcome her and thus put to shame all the other knights. (When Arthur joins the group later and modestly waves to the knights to sit down (Iwein 880-910 and Yvain 650ff) a marked difference to the present scene is obvious. This contrast is underlined through the ethical evaluation in Iwein which is not given in Chrétien:

wander was in weizgot verre
 baz geselle danne herre (Iwein 887-88).

Since Arthur is usually seen either enjoying himself or performing an official function, this comment adds a positive aspect to the King image.) Kalogreant's discriminating behavior annoys Keii as he explains in his long speech (Iwein 113-35). Most of the points he makes here can already be found in Yvain (cf. Yvain 71-85). Both passages are heavily ironical in tone. The main difference is in Kes' excusing the other knights who failed to get up whereas Keii accuses Kalogreant for singling himself out. In looking at the passage in Iwein it is important to see that Keii, as Arthur's seneschal, does not speak for himself alone but for all the courtly knights (cf. the constant usage of "wir," "uns," "undr uns niemen," or "unser keiner"). His claim is that Kalogreant does not deserve the honor bestowed on him by the Queen since they all would have acted alike had they only seen her. But since nobody noticed her Kalogreant should not have exalted his own person among the group of knights. It is the solidarity of the courtly society that Keii speaks for, and Kalogreant ignoring this unity is not acting in an honorable way (Iwein 112). Thus Kalogreant is just pretending to be honorable and his "zuht" is simply imagined.

The courtly vocabulary "höfisch," "êrbaere," "zuht" is here very effectively combined with "ir waenet" and "ir dunket iuch."

The Queen's response (Iwein 137-58) ignores the specific point Keii has made; she talks instead about his habitually degrading the honorable men. And Ginover concludes with the strong words:

wand wir daz wizzen vil wol
daz dû bist bitters eiters vol,
dâ dîn herze inne swebt
und wider dînen êren strebt (Iwein 155-58).

To accuse a knight of a foul and rotten heart (cf. Yvain for a very similar line) is a strikingly severe judgment especially when it is uttered by the Queen herself. Chrétien has Kes simply state in return that it is senseless to continue such a quarrel with its obvious lack of "corteisie" (Yvain 98f). Keii's reply in Iwein, on the other hand, reveals that he is extremely shocked about Ginover's uncourtly behavior. A few diverse lines will illustrate his reaction:

und het irs ein teil nider geleit,
daz zaeme iuwerm namen wol
.....
ir werdet unwert dervon.
.....
gnâde ist bezzer danne reht.
.....
vrouwe, habet gnâde mîn,
und lât sus grôzen zorn sîn.
iwer zorn ist ze ungenaedeclîch:
nien brechet iwer zuht durch mich (Iwein 162-80).

Ginover's anger has made her forget herself; Keii recalls her to her courtly standards. He will even suffer his own vice, he continues, if only the Queen resumes her royal etiquette. (Toward the end of this

scene, Ginover is mentioned with a stereotype attribute again: "diu guote künegîn" (230), perhaps to indicate that she found her proper composure again.)

When Kalogreant finally responds (Iwein 189-229 and, not basically different, Yvain 105-23)--and it must be noted that Keii had addressed him, not the Queen, in the first place (cf. Iwein 113)--his reaction to Keii is much more tolerant than Ginover's was. With his metaphors, such as "der humbel der sol stechen" (206), he puts Keii into place: Keii's character is of such a nature that he simply has to criticize and therefore he may do so.

The long argument in this scene throws some light on Keii's position in the Arthurian Court. He is described as not keen for "êre" and everyone, more or less violently, resents him. Yet he fights for the courtly standards; he defies the appearance of "zuht" in favor of the real courtly behavior itself. Thus he attacks Kalogreant who is striving for honor by cheating the other knights. And he admonishes the Queen who ignores her royal dignity in getting angry. A later passage reveals some more insight into the position of Keii in the Arthurian Court:

ouch sag ich iu ein maere:
 swie schalkhaft Keii waere,
 er was iedoch vil unervorht.
 enheten sîn zunge niht verworht,
 sone gwan der hof nie tiurn heldt.
 daz mugent ir kiesen, ob ir welt,
 bî sînem ampte des er pflac:
 sîn hete niht einen tac
 geruochet der künec Artûs
 ze truhsaezen in sîme hûs (Iwein 2565-74).

These lines are a clear addition in Hartmann's Iwein, not given in Chrétien at all. Yet they appear indispensable since they try to achieve the purpose of integrating Keii into the courtly society and spell out his specific function. Keii's story is, it is said, that he is a fearless, courageous knight. Therefore King Arthur had good reason to choose him as his seneschal. If it were only for his sharp tongue Arthur would not bear with him in his Court. There is obvious irony in these lines. The Arthurian society would like to believe that Keii is, at least, a brave hero--which his actions throughout Erec and Iwein bluntly contradict. And it is, indeed, only for the sake of "sîn zunge" that Keii has an important role to play as an inside critic of the Court.

The figure of Keii, then, whatever evil character he may have (Iwein 2566), has the following function inside the Arthurian setting, as can be summarized from the passage we have interpreted: He is an important member of the Arthurian society, but he stands at the periphery of the courtly circle.¹⁸ His constant criticism creates the proper awareness for everyone to live up to the courtly standards. Thus, although a misfit, he is still a necessary part of the Court.¹⁹

¹⁸ Cf. similar results in Hermann Mushacke, Keiî der kâtspreche in Hartmann von Aue Erec and Iwein (Berlin, 1872), p. 16.

¹⁹ H.B. Willson ("The Rôle of Keiî in Hartmann's Iwein," Medium Aevum, XXX (1961) considers Keii a type representing "superbia" as shown in the work of St. Bernard de Clairvaux (146); as such Keii is used as an "ethical example . . . , his errors are to be avoided at all costs" (156).

All the other members of the Round Table, with the exception of Iwein and Gawein, are idealized in a very general way. Two short consecutive statements about Arthur and his knights may illustrate this point:

sô bringt der küneec Artûs ein her,
 die sint zen besten erkorn
 die ie wurden geborn (Iwein 1854-56).

 ezn kom dar nie in eime tage
 sô manec guot rîter alsô dô (Iwein 2452-53).²⁰

Both passages chosen are taken from the context of Arthur's approaching the well. The only descriptive attributes used for the knights are the forms of "guot" without any other detail. The adverbs "ie" and "nie" may indicate the knights' uniqueness but since they are part of a very common cliché the effect of the statements remains vague. The prowess of the Arthurian knights in general, if seen from the viewpoint of the direct textual representation, does not amount to much. And, indeed, the related events verify this observation (cf., for instance, the knights' complete failure in trying to regain the Queen in the episode of Ginover's rape which will be discussed later).

A new aspect is added to the image of the Arthurian Court when King Arthur follows Iwein's invitation to Laudine's castle. Arthur is said to enjoy himself there although he is torn out of his usual surroundings:

daz er âne sîn lant
 nie bezzer kurzwîle vant:

²⁰ The text passages quoted here are not to be found in Chrétien's Yvain at all.

wan dem was et niht gelîch,
 unde ist ouch unmügelîch
 daz im ûf der erde
 iht gelîches werde (Iwein 2657-62).

From the perspective of a different setting, the Arthurian Court is looked at, and it appears as a place incomparable to anything on earth. The repetition of "gelîch" enclosing this description again gives a firm frame to the statement. This short passage is a rather dry condensation of a long and colorful description of Arthur's welcome at Laudine's court in Chrétien (cf. Yvain 2302-2394). The King here is received by big crowds of cheering people with joyous dances and gay music and he is celebrated as "li rois et li sire/ Des rois" (Yvain 2370f). There is scarcely a trace of this abundant gaiety to be found in Iwein. Rather the subtle point is made that Arthur, away from his Court, is misplaced. He should not be treated as a guest of festive events. For to him as the courtly King it is left to treat his guests to high festivities and superb pleasures, as can be seen in both Erec and Iwein. Scheunemann's comment to this point says: "Nur am Artushof kann sich der höchste Glanz verwirklichen."²¹

Iwein's short return to the Arthurian Court on Gawein's suggestion will briefly be dealt with in the next chapter. Similarly, the final fight in Iwein will be discussed later. Arthur's presence and official functioning there does not add anything new to the image already obtained.

One final aspect of the Arthurian Court remains to be mentioned in this context. Iwein, after having separated himself from the Round

²¹ Scheunemann, p. 114.

Table society because of his apparent loss of honor, still uses Arthur and the courtly knights as his frame of reference (cf., for instance, Iwein 4786f). Thus it is only natural for him to expect the Arthurian Court to offer help to anyone in urgent need. In fact, at one point he goes as far as defining Arthur's Court as the place where you seek advice and help (Iwein 4510-13). Yet he finds out differently; the Court does not live up to his expectations. King Arthur fails Lunete in her extreme distress; no one is at the Court who could fight her cause (Iwein 4165ff); and the people under the violence of the giant Harpin have a similar experience (Iwein 4520ff). While the unheard-of story of the Queen's abduction ("ein vremde maere," Iwein 4528) which Iwein learns here, is told to explain the failure of the Arthurian Court in providing help, it simultaneously reveals a definite flaw in the total set-up of the courtly society. Or, as Scheunemann sees the meaning of this tale: "Der Artusbereich ist in seiner fraglosen Gültigkeit erschüttert."²² For obtaining an image of the Arthurian Court in Iwein this passage (Iwein 4526-4726) is of eminent importance also because it is fully added to Chrétien's account--even though it constitutes a part of the traditional Arthurian legend.²³ In Chrétien's Yvain the Ginover story is mentioned but only in a few passing and superficial lines (Yvain 3918-27).

King Arthur is disgraced, the tale begins. While the courtly knights are sitting at the Round Table, an intruder enters. Misusing

²² Scheunemann, p. 116.

²³ Cf. Roger Sherman Loomis, The Development of Arthurian Romance (London, 1963), p. 47ff.

the courtly vocabulary for an uncourtly intention ("ûf gnâde her komen," "milte," "vrûmekheit," Iwein 4537-39), Meljaganz (his name is given later, Iwein 5680) asks of the King "ein gâbe" (Iwein 4541). Arthur consents to grant this gift on the condition that his request be proper. Meljaganz is annoyed that the King in making this condition does not live up to his reputation (cf. Iwein 4548), and he says outright:

diu werlt hât vil von im gelogen.
man sagt von sîner vrûmekheit,
ezn wurde rîter nie verseit
swes er in ie gebaete (Iwein 4560-63).

This bragging (cf. Iwein 4566) and the insulting accusations of the uncourtly knight cause a naive reaction among the knights of the Round Table. And although Arthur has shown wisdom in setting up a condition, "die von der tavelrunde" convince the King now that he has acted in an uncourtly manner. Since honor is what really counts the King should not have refused the request. Moreover, the knight's appearance is agreeable (Iwein 4573f) so Arthur should have applied the courtly etiquette of unconditional confidence to him as well: "lât ez an sîne hovescheit" (Iwein 4572). Thereupon the King makes Meljaganz return and he does treat him now precisely within the courtly standards: he gives him his word which is identical with an oath (Iwein 4584) that Meljaganz may choose whatever he wishes. When the request that the Queen be led away is expressed ("sîn wîp die kûneginne," Iwein 4587, and similarly 4643, is a repetition for emphasis) Arthur is caught within his own courtly framework; that is, even though the intruding knight does not respect the courtly standards Arthur as the courtly representative is bound to his own etiquette. The language describing the

King's reaction expresses the complete helplessness of Arthur when faced with an outrageous uncourtly behavior:

daz hete die sinne
dem kûnege vil nâch benomen.
er sprach 'wie bin ich überkomen! (Iwein 4588-90).

Especially "überkomen" implies the idea of being overruled and it declares Arthur's impotence in handling the situation. Milnes sees here an "implicit criticism of the code" when "the head of chivalry (is) hoist by his own petard" ²⁴ Arthur's very weak reaction consists simply of blaming those who advised him. Paradoxically enough, it is Meljaganz of all the knights present who gives him some consolation, and he ironically uses the words: "Herre, habent guote site" (Iwein 4595). But this is precisely what Meljaganz himself lacks, whereas the King's difficulties started because of his good manners. Meljaganz also refers to Arthur's good knights in a wording that recalls the cliché used earlier in the work (cf. Iwein 1854ff and 2452ff), and he invites them to fight for the Queen. Again it is stressed that the King could not break his word (Iwein 4608f); it becomes clear how he is defeated within his own code of honor, and the Queen is abducted. Her laments in departing upset the entire Court:

der hof enwart vor noch sît
sô harte nie beswaeret:
· · · · ·
dâ wart michel gâhen:
Ez rief dirre und rief der
'harnasch unde ros her:'
und swer ie gereit wart,
der jagte nâch ûf die vart (Iwein 4620-28).

²⁴ Milnes, 247.

Never before has the Court been so heavily weighed down by serious trouble. The result is utter confusion in the usually highly stylized and almost placid Arthurian Court. One mishap--only possible because of their inflexible courtly standards--causes all the knights to lose their heads.

The importance of Keii's critical function for the Court is shown here when he calls the knights to order: "waz sol dirr ungevüeger schal" (Iwein 4753). Keii is, of course, bragging that he alone will defeat the intruder and that therefore nobody else needs to bother. But his reasoning is right despite the fact that he brags and he at least keeps calm in the tumultuous scene. As was to be expected, Keii is defeated (Iwein 4671ff) and Kalogreant, who in turn wants to fight for the Queen, finds him hanging like a thief. Very uncourtly, he does not even take him down but enjoys Keii's mishap. "The good name of the Arthurian chivalry can only be maintained by silencing and denigrating the critic," Milnes explains in referring to this accident.²⁵ Yet none of the knights challenging Meljaganz is any more successful than Keii has been; they all fail in trying to regain Gino-ver. Only one knight could have saved the Queen: Gawein. But he was not available: "done was er leider niender dâ" (Iwein 4719). He is to be back the next day only, when his immediate presence is needed.

This is as far as the story goes here. Iwein who is seen listening to this tale passes on to new matters without any comment whatsoever. The ending of the "maere" is given in four laconic lines, much later in the work:

²⁵ Milnes, 246.

nu was in den selben tagen
 diu küneginne wider komen,
 die Meljaganz hete genomen
 mit michelre manheit (Iwein 5678-81).

The ambiguous meaning²⁶ of "manheit" in relation to Meljaganz throws an ironic light on Arthur and his knights. They, in comparison, lack what Meljaganz has to offer: manliness and great courage.

It is obvious then that the function of the story of Ginover's rape in Hartmann's Iwein is to depict the complete failure of the Arthurian Court when it is called upon to react to the outside world. The reason for this failure is the courtly society's "preoccupation with its own honor," as Sacker puts it.²⁷ The episode shows the severe limitations of the Court, not only that of the Court in cooperation with the real world but that of the Court within itself. It is, therefore, little surprising to find some of the earlier critics upset about the Ginover story. Any time Iwein is interpreted with the preconceived notion in mind that the Arthurian Court represents a perfect ideal, a statement like the following one by Franz Eggert may be the result: "Dagegen entbehrten wir wohl gern die ausführliche Darlegung der Entführung der Königin Ginover" ²⁸ The reason Eggert would rather do without the episode is that its implicit strong criticism of the entire Arthurian Court cannot be overlooked.

²⁶ Wapnewski criticizes in Iwein in general a lack of "erwünschter Eindeutigkeit" (Hartmann, p. 63). It may, of course, also be claimed that ambiguity, as for instance in the lines above, is usually functional.

²⁷ Sacker, 5.

²⁸ Über die erzählenden Dichtungen Hartmanns von Aue (Schwerin, 1874), p. 32.

Concluding the present chapter then, the results of the various text interpretations may be summarized briefly. The Arthurian Court is represented as an ideal place set outside of time and event. Life at the Court is pleasurable but static. It is completely self-reliant. Its courtly language and code of honor is valid only within its own boundaries; there is no contact with the outside world. Frequently in the text these narrow boundaries of the Court are shown by repetitions that enclose the description, or the text is set apart by an anaphorism, or a circle is created by interlocking terms as an image of the Arthurian Court.

The Arthurian Court is criticized in both epics. The figure of Keii--besides being the obvious contrast to the ideal knight--has the explicit function of watching over the proper keeping of the rules and of pointing out any slight misdemeanors. Furthermore, the Court is implicitly criticized by the breaking of the structural framework at the end of the works through the heroes' turning away from the Arthurian society.

The text interpretations revealed, moreover, that an ironic view of the Arthurian Court cannot be ignored. It is obtained, as irony usually works, through a certain choice of words within a given context. Thus King Arthur, who is mostly seen inactive or performing only official functions, is suddenly said to become active in order to embrace Enite. Or the scene in which Arthur is shown in a priest-like function becomes ironic through the repetition of two very similar lines. The most significant case of irony is the story of Ginover's rape. The tale as a whole criticizes the nonsensical code of honor, as has been shown. Irony specifically is achieved through the usage of courtly language in

an obviously uncourtly situation with disastrous results. In addition to these very apparent ironic scenes, several small hints of irony may be found throughout in the repeated use of clichés and stereotype attributes, especially for the King and the Queen.

The general view Karl Otto Brogsitter gives of Hartmann's epics can certainly be applied to the image of the Arthurian Court as it has been investigated: "Hinter der formalen Glätte von Hartmanns Werk verbirgt sich doch viel mehr an feiner Ironie und leiser Kritik, als man früher wahrhaben wollte."²⁹

III. THE IMAGE OF THE ARTHURIAN KNIGHT

The strivings of the Arthurian Knight are directed toward two aims: Minne and "âventiure."¹ Often these two chivalrous ideals are obtained through the same efforts but they also frequently represent conflicting concerns. What has been said about the French medieval epics may generally be applicable to Hartmann's courtly epics as well: ". . . in der Tat stellen 'aventure' und 'amour' . . . nur verschiedene Aspekte der gleichen Erscheinung dar."² They each belong essentially to the life of an Arthurian Knight. In the following discussion these two aspects of the chivalrous life will be studied. Since in Erec as well as in Iwein more emphasis is given to the description of adventure than to the representation of Minne, this paper will follow a similar trend.

1. Minne

The importance of Minne in the chivalrous life, as shown in the courtly epics of Hartmann, should not be overestimated. An obvious hazard for the interpretation lies in the fact that notions gained in the study of Minnesang are easily carried over to the epics. Yet what stands out in connection with Minne in the text of Erec and Iwein are

¹Max Wehrli, "Roman und Legende im deutschen Hochmittelalter," Worte und Werte (Berlin, 1961), finds the striving for adventure a literary phenomenon that became established only with the courtly epics: "Die Idee des Abenteuers als bildender Erfahrung und Prüfung scheint erst im höfischen Roman . . . entwickelt" (p. 436).

²Ilse Nolting-Hauff, Die Stellung der Liebeskasuistik im höfischen Roman (Heidelberg, 1958), p. 16.

the possible dangers that may be encountered in Minne as an interference with chivalrous goals. Three instances may suffice to convey the idea of what is meant by the hazards of Minne for the Arthurian Knight.

The most readily available example is the "sih verligen"-scene in Erec. Enite has been especially happy because of Erec's "manheit" (Erec 2830 and 2850) which he had proven in many fights. His courage as a successful knight before his marriage had been unquestioned:

Êrec was biderbe unde guot,
 ritterlîche stuont sîn muot
 ê er wîp genaeme
 und hin heim kaeme:
 nû sô er heim komen ist,
 dô kêrte er allen sînen list
 an vrouwen Ênîten minne (Erec 2924-30).

 sîn site er wandeln began (Erec 2934).

Returning home, that is, leaving the Arthurian Court, affects Erec adversely but the more influential effect on him is Enite. His skillful art ("list") which had been directed toward glorious chivalrous deeds is now absorbed by Minne. Twice the text speaks of Erec's change (Erec 2934 and 2984). This change, interior as well as exterior, refers to his "verligen" which is called shameful (Erec 2985 and 2990) and which simultaneously deprives Erec of all honor:

die [Ênîte] minnete er sô sêre
 daz er aller êre
 durch si einen verphlac,
 unz daz er sich sô gar verlac (Erec 2968-71).

The meaning of "sih verligen"³ implies corruption through inactivity.

³Cf. Matthias Lexer, Mittelhochdeutsches Taschenwörterbuch (Stuttgart, 1963).

In a humorous understatement the text explains this indolence; for Erec's attending mass in the morning is referred to with "diz was sîn meistiu arbeit" (Erec 2946). Erec's turning to Minne exclusively has corrupted him. This is made obvious in his loss of chivalrous attributes, or, as the text summarizes his total change:

dô Erec fil de roi Lac
 ritterschefte sich bewac (Erec 2954f).

Minne, then, is seen as opposed to knighthood. It could be argued that it is the powerful Minne which excludes all other human faculties, that is meant here. This is, indeed, the case; nevertheless, the statement holds, as the example of Iwein will demonstrate.

Before the Iwein passage is studied, a second example from Erec will indicate the proper relationship between Minne and adventure as Erec has since come to understand it. Erec's last adventure is his fight with Mabonagrín at Joie de la Curt. The function of Erec's defeating Mabonagrín is to indicate that he finally comes to grips with his initial problem. For in Joie de la Curt--the name suggests the enjoying of the confines of the paradise-like garden⁴--the "sîh verligen" problem has occurred from the point of view of the lady who insists on the knight's anti-social confinement to this garden for the sake of her love. Erec now teaches Mabonagrín the lesson he himself has learned:

swie wûnneclîch et hinne sî
 und swie deheiner slahte guot
 sô sêre ringe den muot
 sô dâ liep bî liebe lît,

⁴Cf. Hugo Kuhn, "Erec," in Festschrift Paul Kluckhohn und Herrmann Schneider (Tübingen, 1948), p. 136.

als ir und iuwer wîp sît,
 sô sol man warlîchen
 den wîben doch entwîchen
 zetelîcher stunde.
 ich hân ez ûz ir munde
 heimlîchen vernomen
 daz hin varn und wider komen
 âne ir haz mac geschehen (Erec 9417-28).

These lines offer a solution to the problem of Minne versus chivalry, and they must be understood as Erec's mature outlook at the end of his long journey. Minne, then, may be integrated into the Arthurian Knight's life as long as it leaves him free to turn away whenever he feels like pursuing his chivalrous adventures.⁵

The example from Iwein showing how Minne is subordinated to chivalry stands in direct relationship with Erec. A few days after Iwein's marriage to Laudine, "her Gâwein der getriuwe man" (Iwein 2767), who has come to Iwein's new castle with Arthur and the courtly knights, takes Iwein aside and warns him not to follow Erec's example and forget his knighthood for the love of his wife. And he outright demands that Iwein leave his wife behind and join the Arthurian Knights once again:

ir sult mit uns von hinnen varn:
 wir suln turnieren als ê.
 mir tuot anders iemer wê
 daz ich iuwer kûnde hân,
 sol iuwer ritterschaft zergân (Iwein 2802-06).

To illustrate his warning of the threatened loss of knighthood and to make his case even more urgent, Gawein adds the colorful "Krautjunker"-

⁵H. Forster (Studien zur Wesensbestimmung der höfischen Minne. Groningen, 1956) explains the subordinate role of Minne from a sociological perspective: "Nur derjenige lebt höfisch, der in der Gesellschaft lebt; leben ausserhalb der Gesellschaft ist eine contradictio in terminis, denn dies würde Verlust an êre bedeuten" (p. 214).

image, the description of a former knight who changes his life after marriage, because he settles down and becomes totally absorbed in his domestic worries, imagined or real, and ends up a typical bumpkin, not the least resembling a knight (cf. Iwein 2807ff). And finally, Gawein's last argument is the lady's preference for a worthy knight:

wan ir ist von herzen leit
sîn unwirde und sîn verlegenheit (Iwein 2869f).

Gawein's plea is readily understood by Iwein, which shows that the idea of adventure in preference to Minne is not new to the Arthurian Knight. Only the description of Iwein's departure reveals his inner conflict through the paradox given:

mit lachendem munde
truobetn im diu ougen (Iwein 2964f).

Iwein forsakes Laudine when he returns to the Arthurian Court. In order to be a perfect Arthurian Knight it seems to be necessary to leave exclusive Minne behind.

In the course of both Erec and Iwein, the two heroes are shown in their extreme efforts to meet the courtly standards, at least as they see them--for objectively speaking both knights are reaching beyond the Arthurian ideals, as will be seen later. In both cases, Minne is present as an underlying stimulus and in neither case is love ignored. For when the chivalrous success of the knights is clearly established and they are welcomed back into the circle of the Arthurian Court, Erec and Iwein leave the Arthurian society in order to return to their wives and their own castles.

Thus it may be seen that Minne, although it forms a part of the image of the Arthurian Knight, does not play an eminent role in the plot of the courtly epics. Hermann Schneider explains this symptom as follows: "Überraschenderweise wird . . . der Minnedienst im Sinne der Hohen Minne kaum je zum Thema des höfischen Epos; es geht um die Diensthilfe für hilfsbedürftige Frauen, um Jugendliebe, Werbung, die zur Ehe führt, Eheprobleme . . . : die breitere Thematik des höfischen Epos scheint der Wirklichkeit näher zu stehen, als die Kunstwelt des strengen Minnesangs es tut."⁶ The question arises immediately: what then does the Arthurian Knighthood consist of? Gawein, in his long speech to Iwein quoted above, sees "turnieren" as an important part of "rîterschaft", in fact indispensable in such a way that knighthood depends on this activity.

2. Adventure.

This second part of the chapter will now discuss the meaning of "âventiure" for the Arthurian Knight. It will deal further with the various kinds of adventures described in Erec and Iwein. Finally it will interpret at length the description of the last fight in Iwein.

The dictionary meaning of "âventiure" reads: "begebenheit . . . ; gewagtes beginnen mit ungewissem ausgang; zufälliges, besonders glückliches ereignis."⁷ The verb "âventiuren" and its semantics offer more insight into the meaning as far as adventure is a characteristic of the Arthurian Knight: "durch gefahrvolle unternehmungen aufs spiel setzen,

⁶ "Höfisches Epos," Reallexikon, I, 670.

⁷ Cf. Lexer.

wagen. ritterliches wesen treiben." Both explanations underline the hazards of the event. "Âventiure" is dangerous, dangerous enough to risk one's life, and it is connected with chivalry. In this sense the term is used throughout Erec without ever being questioned. In the later work Iwein, however, the term suddenly seems to need defining, not so much for the sake of the Arthurian Knight but because of the obvious lack of understanding in the outside world.

Early in the epic, Kalogreant is found telling his tale of adventure to his friends, the knights of the Arthurian Court. When he starts out

daz ich nâch âventiure reit,
gewâfent nâch gewonheit (Iwein 262f),

his words make sense to everyone present. He does not need clarification of the term, nor does he need to go into further details; for everything he reports having done was the usual ("nâch gewonheit"), a commonplace for all the knights present. Yet his tale reveals that the reaction is different as soon as he leaves the boundaries of the Arthurian world. The first castle he encounters after his rough ride through the forest is owned by a knight who is pictured as a perfect and very courteous knight even though he is not an Arthurian Knight. He receives Kalogreant with great hospitality and treats him as a welcome guest. But then Kalogreant reports as follows:

dô wir mit vreuden gâzen
 und dâ nâch gesâzen,
 und ich im hâte geseit
 daz ich nâch âventiure reit,
 des wundert in vil sêre,
 und jach daz im nie mêre
 dehein der gast waere komen
 von dem er haete vernomen
 daz er âventiure suochte (Iwein 369-77).

The lord of the castle is obviously amazed; it appears that he has never heard of seeking adventure. (It makes no difference whether the emphasis in line 377 lies on "âventiure" or "suochte" for the two belong together in the understanding of the Arthurian Knight.) Kalogreant, in response, is neither surprised at this knight's reaction, nor does he wonder how the knight of this castle would be spending his time, since he has been described earlier with "einen mûzerhabech ûf der hant" (Iwein 284) which suggests that he hunts. The most significant function of the text quoted above is to demonstrate that "âventiure" is not a necessary ingredient of knighthood as such but typical for the Arthurian Knight.

Whereas the two knights in this first incident are strangers but connected in their chivalry, Kalogreant's next encounter with the "walttôr" represents the clashing of two completely different levels of existence. The appearance of the "walttôr" is not relevant in this context. Important only is the conversation between the refined, self-possessed Arthurian Knight on his way to adventure and the uncivilized, humble, almost animal-like man in the forest. After he has asked Kalogreant what he is up to, the conversation runs as follows:

ich sprach 'ich wil dich wizzen lân,
 ich suoche âventiure.'
 dô sprach der ungehiure
 'âventiure? waz ist daz?'
 'daz wil ich dir bescheiden baz.
 nû sich wie ich gewâfent bin:
 ich heize ein rîtr und hân den sin
 daz ich suochende rîte
 einen man der mit mir strîte,
 der gewâfent sî als ich.
 daz prîset in, ersleht er mich:
 gesige ich aber im an,
 sô hât man mich vûr einen man,
 und wirde werder danne ich sî (Iwein 524-36).

The simple question of what adventure is, directed to an Arthurian Knight, is laden with irony. Within the Arthurian world the mere possibility of such a question is considered unthinkable. Yet here it is asked quite bluntly by a "walttôr." Kalogreant's subsequent definition reveals the shallowness of his chivalrous endeavour. Seeking for adventure does not mean anything else but finding a partner with whom he fights for his life. The one who succeeds in killing the other one has proven his value and will be considered a hero. It must be stressed here that a noble cause, or any cause whatsoever, does not constitute an integral part of adventure. The mere fact of fighting a joust and killing or being killed proves the Arthurian Knight's honor or lack of honor. "This primitive and brutish code of behavior never appears to be questioned by Kalogreant."⁹

Kalogreant's definition of what adventure means is an addition to Chrétien's Yvain. It immediately refers back to a passage within the same scene in Iwein. The "walttôr" tries to explain to the Arthurian King why it is possible for him to surround himself with so many

⁹Sacker, 8.

wild beasts without being harmed by them, and he states:

'ich pflige ir, und si vürhtent mich
als ir meister unde ir herren' (Iwein 494f).

The "walttôr", then, is made lord of the animals for no other reason than that he serves them. This reasoning of the text here openly contradicts the mastership that is sought in fighting jousts. His superiority over the beasts makes good sense, and at the same time, his attitude ridicules the Arthurian Knight's adventure-seeking. Significantly enough, the "walttôr", at the end of their conversation, rephrases Kalogreant's definition of adventure with the wording "daz dû nâch ungemache strebest" (Iwein 545). This is what adventure looks like if seen from someone outside the Arthurian world.

As was shown so far, "âventiure" is questioned and implicitly also criticized by a noble knight as well as by a rude lord of animals. It could be argued that their judgment is invalid since they have not yet seen a joust and its glorious ending. As if to avoid such an argument, a third criticism of adventure is present, and this aspect appears in both Erec and Iwein in a similar context. In Erec the lord of the castle at Brandigan explains to Erec the tragic fate of the eighty women whom Erec later frees from their prison; they are the widows of knights who

von tumbes herzen stiure,
si ensuochten âventiure (Erec 8480f).

And in Iwein, the suffering of the three hundred women has originally been caused by the lord of their country who

gewan den muot daz er reit
 niuwan durch sîne kintheit
 suochen âventiure (Iwein 6329-31).

In each case, the women concerned are the immediate victims of knights who failed in adventures they had no need to undertake. Although it is little surprising that these women would criticize adventure-seeking as foolish childishness their strong criticism adds to the text passages already studied and reveals a new angle. The tragedy of these women rounds up the negative image of "âventiure".

For the typical Arthurian Knight the question of a noble cause for his adventure or of possible tragic results does not arise. Important for him is only the fact that his "manheit" must be proven or established in adventures (cf. Iwein 631f). Kalogreant's search for adventure must be regarded as a typical instance. He rides out for adventure, takes the first occasion for a fight that he can create, and feels dishonored because the lord of the well, whose land Kalogreant playfully destroys, defeats him. (The symbolic meaning of the attraction of the well and the encounter with the powerful forces of the "real" world is not relevant in this immediate context.) King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table are unanimous in their reaction to Kalogreant's tale: he has to be revenged (Iwein 900ff). Thus it is obvious that "âventiure", as much as it may be criticized outside the Arthurian Court, is taken for granted and taken very seriously inside the Arthurian society.

Kalogreant's adventure-seeking in Iwein is a typical example easily applicable to all Arthurian Knights. The series of adventures,

however, that Erec and Iwein undergo will have to be seen from a slightly different perspective. The following part of this paper will study Erec's and Iwein's adventures. The main interest in the brief enumerations of the fights will lie with the hero and the nature of the adventure.

2a. Erec

Erec's first adventure is his joust with Iders in which Erec revenges the dwarf's insults. Erec starts the day of the fight by attending mass:

. . . si kâmen
dâ si messe vernâmen
von dem heiligen geiste:
des phlegent si aller meiste
die ze ritterschefte sinnent
und turnieren minnent (Erec 662-67).

The verb "phlegen" here points out that this is the usual behavior pattern of a knight who intends to fight. Furthermore, the love of a joust is here characteristically combined with the striving for knight-hood. In the following lines (735ff), the colorful and rich armor of the knight Iders is contrasted with Erec's lack of splendor in order to show his exclusive dependence on courage and skill. The fight takes place in a big "rinc" (755-1017), which is surrounded by spectators. Starting out on horses, the knights later continue to struggle on foot with their swords and shields. The phrases used in the text to describe their fight, such as "si vehten / gelîch zwein guoten knehten" (Erec 834f), or "si beide spilten ein spil" (Erec 867), are typical expressions for this kind of an organized cultivated fight between two more or less

equal partners. After some time of concentrated fighting, Iders talks politely to Erec, the "edel ritter guot" (Erec 898), suggesting:

unser bloedez vehten
enzimt niht guoten knehten (Erec 902f)

and he advises:

daz wir diz bloede vehten lân
und eine wîle rouwen gân (Erec 908f).

The term "bloedez vehten" strongly indicates Iders' listlessness and his need for a rest. This break, however, is not usual in general for a fight, only typical for a chivalrous courtly fight like the one presently considered. After the resting period, Iders and Erec "griffen an ir altez spil" (Erec 916) and Erec finally turns out the victor when he remembers the actual reason for the fight which he seems to have all but forgotten in the pleasure of the jousts. His ensuing conversation with Iders ends in Iders giving him "des sicherheit" (Erec 1014) so that Erec would not kill him.

This first fight regains Erec's honor, and before all establishes him as a worthy member of courtly knighthood. The audience present at the fight, the rules surrounding the jousts, the civilized procedure of the "spil" itself, all these features follow "bestimmten, für diesen Lebenskreis geltenden Normen."¹⁰ The term "spil" for the fight which is found frequently in this description, as has been seen, is henceforth used only occasionally for a fight in Erec; in Iwein this term is reserved exclusively for the final fight between Iwein and Gawein.

¹⁰ Adolf Waas, Der Mensch im deutschen Mittelalter (Graz, 1964), p. 121.

The biggest "turnei" related in Erec (2220-2857) is arranged by Gawein after Erec's wedding. It lasts for several days and is attended by Arthur and his entire Court. Erec, a newcomer to these festive events, is armed and clad by King Arthur himself. Many lines are devoted to the exquisite workmanship of Erec's armor and weapons (cf. Erec 2262-2357). In his eagerness to start the tournament, Erec fights the first joust with two knights before anyone else appears on the scene, and throughout the day, his excellence attracts everyone (cf. "in minnete allez daz in sach," 2401). For the pleasure of fighting, Erec keeps on since he enjoys being praised and thus gaining honor:

dô geviel im diu êre
 diu in an lobe zierte,
 daz er vünfstunt tjostierte
 alsô daz nie ritter baz (Erec 2433-37).

It is "êre" and "lop" that Erec is fighting for, and in a cliché--that is, that there has never been a better knight, which is one of Hartmann's "formelhafte unbestimmte Hyperbeln," as Anthony van der Lee sees it¹¹--his excellence as a knight is established. It must be noted also that the entire tournament is described in a very lively manner so that the actual fighting action is demonstrated; as for instance in the following two quotes:

dô wart ritterlîche
 genuoc getjostieret
 und wol gepunieret
 und geslagen mit dem swerte (Erec 2459-62),

¹¹ Der Stil von Hartmanns Erec (Utrecht, 1950), p. 54.

or as in the description where the sight and sound of the fight are equally represented:

nû wart dâ vil sêre
 geslagen und gestochen,
 manec sper zebrochen,
 dô beidenthalp diu ritterschaft
 mit sô williger kraft
 zesamene liezen strîchen.
 nû enmohte sich gelîchen
 der schal von den scheften
 niwan dâ von windes kreften
 ein walt begunde vallen (Erec 2603-12).

In the midst of the turmoil of the tournament, Erec is repeatedly singled out; he is almost made to seem equal with Gawein, the perfect Arthurian Knight (cf. Erec 2743f). Especially at the end of the tournament, his chivalrous "werdekeit" is compared with some of the greatest names in history: Salomon, Absalom, Samson and Alexander; for Erec has been proclaimed the victor of the entire festival. Even Enite is full of praise after the jousts; she has hesitated with her approval earlier, but now decides:

daz ir ze manne waere ein degen
 lieber dan ein arger zage,
 unde lie swache klage
 und was sîner manheit
 beide stolz und gemeit (Erec 2847-51).

Courage and honor, as opposed to cowardice, are revealed in the fight; the knight proves his "manheit", a term that implies all a young knight like Erec strives for.

It is for this very reason, to prove his "manheit", that Erec after the turning point of the plot in Erec, starts out on the long and weary journey with Enite:

nâch âventiure wâne
reit der guote kneht Erec (Erec 3111f).

The text which relates the various adventures that Erec encounters from now on leaves no doubt that "âventiure" on his journey into the real world has not much in common with the kind of adventure that is fought in the Arthurian Court. In the following discussion Erec's fights will be mentioned briefly by pointing out their characteristics.

Erec's first "âventiure" happens in the dark of the forest where Erec and Enite are riding during the night. The three robbers awaiting the couple are described distributing Erec's wife, his armor and his belongings among them even before they threaten his life. After they attack Erec he--"durch sînen grimmen muot" (Erec 3221)--stabs all three of them. Although the fight is not very glamorous it may appear as another proof of Erec's excellence that he kills three robbers single-handed. Yet the text qualifies this first impression when the robbers' insufficient outfit and their bad weapons are mentioned:

in wâren bein und arme blôz,
des Êrec an dem sige genôz.
si wâren gewâfent slehte
nâch roubaere rehte:
daz was Êrecke guot (Erec 3226-30).

That Erec's victory is, at least partly, caused not through his "vrûmekheit" (cf. Erec 3235) but through the robbers' inferior arms is stated here repeatedly with an open touch of irony. The latter is only increased when the text reads a few lines later:

Êrec was vûr die drîe komen
mit êren, als ir habet vernomen (Erec 3310f).

And, notably, the term "êre" has not been mentioned in the entire scene so far--which suggests an additional ironic hint. The second part of this adventure, when Erec kills the next five robbers all by himself (Erec 3390ff), is barely mentioned. Only one feature of this fight is given here: Erec's lance breaks and he has to continue fighting with his sword. The function of relating this incident is probably to point out the moment of real danger entailed in such a mishap for Erec.

The treacherous host in Erec's next adventure, the "grâve," and six of his men are killed by Erec quite easily, it appears. At least not much detailed description is given of the fight. The deception of the supposedly friendly "grâve" and his deadly intentions are dealt with before, so that Erec is well justified in killing him. It is all the more important that Erec before fighting his opponent raises the principal question of the other knight's lack of courtliness:

'ir enthöveschet iuch,' sprach Êrec,

 ir sît an swachem hove erzogen.
 nû schamet iuch: ir habet gelogen.
 ich bin edeler dan ir sît.'
 nû huop sich der strît (Erec 4197 and 4202-05).

It seems that "enthöveschen" is the strongest insult that Erec can come up with. For a matter of life and death, as in this case, it is not only an understatement but also a courtly term, misplaced in the reality of this world and therefore not understood as the weak response shows. The "strît" here lasts only long enough for Erec to win and leave; and Erec prays God to take him out of this danger (Erec 4232ff).

Erec's adventures so far--although Enite refers, for instance, to the robbers' fight as "ein unsenftez spil" (Erec 3153)--are now

considered nothing but "gar ein kindes spil" (Erec 4270) in comparison with Erec's next adventure. His opponent is a dwarf, the introduction to the battle explains, but at the same time Guivreiz excels in "manheit" (the term appears three times within this small passage, Erec 4280-4317). Guivreiz welcomes Erec, makes fun of the "guot ritter," who is searching for adventure (Erec 4337ff), and offers to fight him. Still weak from his previous battles, Erec would like to avoid another fight so soon but Guivreiz' insulting mockery of Erec's imagined knighthood and an outright challenge (Erec 4370ff) start the fight. It turns out that Erec has found an equal opponent who, in fact, had never before been defeated (cf. Erec 4529f). The fierce fight lasts a full day, and since nobody is there to observe the proper fighting procedure they wound each other severely. Guivreiz acknowledges Erec as the victor and admits

wan daz dir diu êre
geschiht von dîner manheit (Erec 4451f).

Erec has proven his worth against a knight who has made fun of the Arthurian Knight's search for adventure. The very issue of this particular fight is "manheit!" Guivreiz, a knight himself, and belonging to the real world, is close enough to Erec to share his basic prerequisites for fighting. The fact that Erec proved his prowess with him makes Erec acceptable in this real world. This acceptance is significantly expressed in the friendship established between the dwarf and Erec after the fight (Erec 4551ff).

A new characteristic appears in Erec's next fight with the giants. For the first time Erec does not fight for the sake of fighting only, but to help another knight. The almost sadistic description of the two

giants torturing a knight stands in extreme contrast to the courtly peaceful scenes given elsewhere in the work:

si sluogen in âne barmen,
sô sêre daz dem armen
diu hût hin abe hie
von dem houbete an diu knie.
si brâchen vaste ritters reht (Erec 5408-12).

While these lines show something of the cruelty in this account they have another importance as well. In mistreating the captured knight the way the giants do here they, of course, not only violate the chivalrous code but also any conceivable human right. Thus this understatement throws an ironic light on knighthood as if it had excluded itself from the human category.

Erec's attack on the two cruel giants is, indeed, a bold effort, even inconceivable to the giants themselves:

wan si enhâten vorhte noch wân
daz er si getorste bestân (Erec 5496f).

Yet Erec manages, and even without harm to himself, to kill both of them. The text explicitly shows that it had hardly been possible for Erec to survive had he not had the help of God who also assisted David against Goliath (cf. Erec 5560ff). Thus the seriousness of this fight is emphasized through the fact that for each slaying God's assistance is specifically mentioned. And, notably, this reference is made in Erec's first

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Cf. Kuhn, "Erec", p. 131.

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It is possible to see this present example and others quoted in this paper, as a use of litotes, a frequently applied literary device in Middle High German literature, as Alfred Hübner explains. His study of the context in which litotes appear reveals the emphasis usually connected with them: "Wo aber das Individuelle hervordringt . . . , wo schärfere Akzente nötig werden, da bedient man sich ihrer." (Die "mhd. Ironie" oder die Litotes im Altdeutschen. Leipzig, 1930, p. 126f).

fight for a good cause. (As was mentioned earlier in the paper, the tortured knight, Cadoc, is freed by Erec and then sent to Arthur's Court.)

The episode with Oringles at Limors is not important here because of the fighting as such, since it consists only in a swift act of revenge in which Erec slays Oringles. It is significant, however, for pointing out Erec's growing awareness for others in need. Enite's cries for help in this scene arouse him from apparent death.¹⁴ Thus it may be said that it is less for the sake of an adventure than for altruistic reasons that Erec regains life which, after his "symbolical death and resurrection," constitutes "a fuller and richer life."¹⁵

It is of crucial importance that the next fight in the sequence of adventures is Erec's fight with Guivreiz because it strikingly reveals the absurdity of the search for "âventiure." King Guivreiz and his men are on their way to Limors to rescue Erec who, the dwarf has heard, is in trouble. They encounter Erec in the forest but neither recognizes the other one. It is Erec, who still very weak and wounded, prepares to start the fight, and Guivreiz necessarily retaliates. Erec is now beaten, and "diz was Êrecke nie geschehen" (Erec 6926). After the defeat, the two friends recognize each other's identity and the whole paradox of the fight is brought to light. Guivreiz blames himself and

¹⁴ Tax (278) sees Erec's resurrection in Limors as an imitation of the Biblical description of Lazarus' resurrection which was a topos in the middle ages ("Studien zum Symbolischen").

¹⁵ Willson, "Sin and Redemption in Erec," Germanic Review, XXXIII (1958), 9.

regrets Erec's misery; yet Erec's reply reveals a deep new insight he has gained which shall be quoted at length since it is crucial for Erec's inner development:

ir enhabet an mir niht missetân.
 swelh man toerlîche tuot,
 wirts im gelônnet, daz ist guot.
 sît daz ich tumber man
 ie von tumpheit muot gewan
 sô grôzer unmâze
 daz ich vremder strâze
 eine wolde walten
 unde vor behalten
 sô manegem guoten knehte,
 dô tâtet ir mir rehte.
 mîn buoze wart ze kleine,
 dô ich alters eine
 iuwer aller êre wolde hân:
 ich solde baz ze buoze stân (Erec 7009-23).

Erec here accuses himself with an accumulation of very strong terms ("toerlîche," "tumb," "tumpheit," "unmâze") of the foolishness of his endeavors. He realizes that his adventure-seeking goes too far, exceeds the limits of proper behavior even: it is not honorable but it is stupid simply to fight at all cost, neither considering his own condition nor the strength of his opponent. Since he alone against all the others involved--here Erec's new altruistic trait comes up again--has wanted to gain honor, he now well deserves his defeat. This event marks Erec's most important single step toward maturing. He reaches an understanding well beyond the limits of the Arthurian Knight who would act precisely the way Erec has done in this "âventiure" but without obtaining Erec's insight into the absurdity of such behavior.

Erec's final "âventiure" on his journey is his fight with the "rôte man," Mabonagrîn, in Joie de la Curt. Erec considers it "gar ein

wunschpil" (Erec 8530) because this last adventure represents the most difficult and final test for him and it also serves to rehabilitate his honor:

ob mir got der êren gan
daz ich gesige an disem man,
sô werde ich êren rîche (Erec 8560-62).

This joust is well organized and has elements of the usual pattern, such as attending mass in the morning (Erec 8635ff), an audience outside of the garden waiting for the results, and an initial argument between the two opponents before they start fighting. The fight as such is fierce but it proves to be a fair struggle between almost equal opponents. One part of the actual fighting procedure is described intricately through a rare usage of Minne-imagery:

hie huop sich herzeminne
nâch starkem gewinne.
si minneten sunder bette:
diu minne stuont ze wette,
sweder nider gelaege,
dem wart der tût waege.
mit scheften si sich kusten
durch schilte zuo den brusten
mit solher minnekrefte
.
. . . daz die spiltern ûfe stuben (Erec 9106-17).

The Minne they are wooing here is death, and the forces of Minne cause destruction. As was shown earlier, the two knights involved have both suffered from Minne. It is thus seen in this image that in fighting against Minne in the form of death they each tackle their own problem.

Even aside from this conceit-like image, the whole fight is carefully described: They start on horseback, dismount, seize their swords

after their lances have broken, protect themselves with first their shields and then only with their armor. After Erec has received a big blow on his helmet, he strikes back--and so it goes back and forth in a continuous action, as the text renders visible with the repetition of "slac" in the following passage:

Êrec begunde et vaste
 rechen den grôzen slac.
 er ensluoc niht sam er ê phlac,
 sîn slege wâren grimmeclîch,
 zagen slegen ungelîch.
 er gap slac umbe slac,
 daz slac neben slage lac (Erec 9249-55).

In all but the first line quoted "slac" or similar forms appear and its accumulation at the end leaves the impression that the blows come with constantly increasing speed. The fight ends in wrestling until "Erec der wunderaere" (9308) is able to claim the honor of the victory. He achieved here "den Sieg über den typischen Minneritter,"¹⁶ and in this sense his fight has been most significant for his own development. (In connection with Mabonagrins defeat, Erec is now able to free the eighty women as was mentioned earlier.)

After this series of adventures Erec returns to the Arthurian Court, but his stay there is brief. The obvious reason for his quick departure is--like a deus-ex-machina--the death of his father King Lac so that Erec has to take over the royal throne in his country. An inner reason, however, may have become apparent by now: Erec, the very excellent Arthurian Knight, in his prowess even compared with Gawain, has developed

¹⁶ Antonín Hrubý, "Die Problemstellung in Chrétien und Hartmanns Erec," DVJ, XXXVIII (1964), 356.

beyond the limitations of the typical knight of the "tavelrunde" (cf., for instance, Erec 1629ff). His search for "âventiure" has offered him more than he had originally looked for: he has become aware of the absurdity of adventure for its own sake, and he has simultaneously become aware of another fierce but real world existing apart from the Arthurian courtly life. The text that explains Erec's necessary return to Karnant because of his duties there implies a critical view of "âventiure":

nû was des sînem lande nôt
daz er sich abe taete
solher unstaete
und daz er heim vüere (Erec 9971-74).

Erec's adventure-seeking, as much as it had grown into a sensible and altruistic activity by the end of his journey, is considered in retrospect as lacking in serious commitment. "Der . . . unverbindliche, 'zweckfreie' Zustand der ritterlichen Bewährung durch Abenteuer," as Petrus W. Tax names it,¹⁷ has to be abandoned for the serious duty of his new royal responsibility.

Before the discussion turns to Iwein and his series of adventures, only a short word must be said about Erec in Chrétien's work. It is especially noteworthy that all the lines that have been relevant in the present interpretation of Erec's fights are totally absent in Erec et Enide. There is an obvious lack of theoretical discussion of the reasons for the fights or their possible honorable results. The most important difference, however, lies in the fact that Erec in Chrétien's

¹⁷Tax, "Studien zum Symbolischen," 287.

work does not seem to undergo an inner change; there is no development beyond the mere joy of fighting a bloody adventure. As such, Chrétien's Erec has grown in age and skill at the end of the work but he has not matured, as he does in Hartmann's Erec.

2b. Iwein

As was mentioned earlier in this chapter, there is no need for the Arthurian Knight to find a reason for his search for adventure beyond the simple intention that he wants to prove himself. This is the precise reason given when Iwein first leaves the Arthurian Court in quest of "âventiure." Should King Arthur arrive at the well first, so Iwein worries, "mir wirt mîn rîterschaft benomen" (Iwein 913), which is what he has to establish in this first fight.

Iwein's first fight with the lord of the well is described only in rough outlines: They start fighting with lances on horseback, later dismount and after a severe sword fight (cf. "ir deweder was ein zage," Iwein 1046) Iwein mortally wounds his opponent. As far as the fight goes it is characteristic. But one very important feature is missing: there is no audience. That fact is stressed twice: "sît ez niemen sah" (Iwein 1035 and similarly 1033). Thus the adventure in which Iwein proves his "manheit" (Iwein 1042) in an honorable fight (cf. Iwein 1021) threatens to be useless for Iwein if his wounded partner escapes. The reason is given as follows:

und waz ime sîn arbeit töhte,
so er mit niemen enmöhte
erziugen dise geschiht
(wan dâne was der liute niht):
sô spraecher im an sîn êre (Iwein 1067-71).

The "er" referred to in the last line quoted is, of course, Keii. The lines here represent Iwein's interior monologue with which he justifies his persecuting his opponent "âne zuht" (Iwein 1056). Thus "Iwein's eagerness to escape Keii's mockery leads him to transgress the Arthurian code."¹⁸ He explains, in fact, that the honor of his successful adventure would be denied him if he could not prove his accomplishment. Iwein is mainly afraid of Keii, but nevertheless the generalized apprehension also seems to imply a lack of trust among the Arthurian knights. A small passage later in the text makes it clear that Iwein needed either a witness or some other proof of his fight:

waer er ze hove gekêret
 âne geziuc sînre geschiht:
 wand man geloupt imes niht (Iwein 1728-30).

For the image of the Arthurian Knight, the question raised here is crucial since it equals the question: do not Arthurian Knights trust each other? One key word of the lines above may give a clue to a possible understanding: if Iwein returned "ze hove" they would not believe him. This is to say that--seen from the perspective inside the Arthurian Court--anything outside of the Court is unreal for the Arthurian Knight and, therefore, hard to believe. Iwein, so far a typical Arthurian Knight himself, is aware of this gap between the two worlds and tries to provide for it.

The work deals very little with Iwein as the typical Arthurian Knight as such. After the first adventure has established Iwein's

¹⁸Sacker, 10.

"manheit" he is only passingly mentioned at the peak of his Arthurian Knighthood in the passage where he is seen in honorable jousts with the exemplary knight Gawein:

swâ sî turnierens pflâgen,
des sî niht verlâgen,
dâ muost selch rîterschaft geschehen
die got mit êren möhte sehn (Iwein 3043-46).

Concerned with tournaments for his own chivalrous honor, Iwein omits his obligation to his wife--or perhaps in a wider sense, to his fellow men as well. Lunete's curse dishonors Iwein and he leaves the Arthurian Court. The self-centeredness of the Arthurian Knight that is shown--and implicitly criticized--in this scene is from now on absent in Iwein's fights, as will become obvious in a brief survey of his adventures after this turning point.

The function of Iwein's becoming "ein tôre in dem walde" (Iwein 3260) is to demonstrate his fall from the ideal state of the Arthurian Knighthood to the cruel reality of the lowest level of human existence. Iwein is not only uncivilized (cf. Iwein 3237f) but even unaware of his identity (Iwein 3255ff)--"wie ein wildes Tier," as Max Wehrli sees him,¹⁹ the complete perversion of his former chivalrous self-centeredness. Iwein remains in this dejected state long enough to be able to identify with it. For his healing process reveals him as a man between two worlds (Iwein 3505ff): he takes his "tôr"-appearance for his real personality and attributes his knighthood to his dream world; "bistuz Iwein, ode wer?" (Iwein 3609). The description of Iwein

¹⁹Wehrli, "Roman und Legende," p. 435.

as "der edele tôre" (Iwein 3347), a contradiction in itself, with his naked unkempt appearance and crude manners is obviously given as a parallel to the figure of the "waldmensch" whom Kalogreant talks about. And this parallel may be carried further: the noble mind of the "walt-tôr" has been revealed in his gaining mastery through serving the wild beasts. To help others--this is precisely the insight Iwein gains from his "tôr"-experience. He does not talk about it as an intellectual understanding, but from now on his acts are not only tinged by altruistic motives; rather he now fights explicitly in order to assist those who need help. It will also become apparent in the course of the discussion how Iwein finds a new identity after this "tôr"-experience; for the main difference between the "waldmensch" and Iwein is that Iwein develops whereas the primitive creature remains static, as the work shows. One further point must be made here: after Iwein has thus fallen from the ideal world into the crude reality, his belonging to two worlds is from now on characteristic for him. The Arthurian Court will always claim his membership at the Round Table, yet he will never part with the real world again; "he never does make his way back to his initial position."²⁰

Iwein's first fight after his rescue from the forest is scarcely an "âventiure" nor is this term used here. Iwein fights bravely in order to free "diu vrowe von Nârisôn" (Iwein 3802) of her oppression through Alier. He only lends his hand to help the lady in her distress. He neither enjoys the fight nor is he proud of it, but he wanders off

immediately after, "und volget einer strâze" (Iwein 3827).

On his way again, Iwein witnesses a fierce fight between "ein wurm unde ein lewe" (Iwein 3840). There is no question in Iwein's mind about whether to offer immediate help except for the doubt about whom to assist in his need:

hern Îwein tete der zwîvel wê
wederm er helfen solde,
und bedâht sich daz er wolde
helfen dem edelen tiere (Iwein 3846-49).

The repetition of "helfen," which is a keyword in all his fights, now makes his good intention obvious. Iwein decides for the conventionally nobler of the two beasts "und half dem lewen ûz der nôt" (Iwein 3864). Iwein's initial fear of the lion is soon erased by the lion's devout behavior. Thus Iwein experiences precisely the kind of mastery the "waldmensch" had talked about: serve others in their need and they will serve you.

From now on Iwein and his lion are constant companions. The lion

--- volgt im swar er kêrte
und gestuont im ze aller sîner nôt,
unz sî beide schiet der tût (Iwein 3880-82).

Iwein's life-long companionship with the animal, the noble beast, plays a meaningful role in the entire work, and it may be interpreted as follows: The "walttôr"-experience in the forest has brought Iwein in touch with primitive reality so far unknown to him in his courtly life. He has come to understand that this basic reality is a necessary aspect of human existence, and he intends now to integrate this new grasp of reality by the symbolic gesture of making the animal his constant

companion.²¹ The lion thus represents a part of Iwein's personality, a part that in all the cultural refinement of the Arthurian Court had so far been neglected in Iwein's life. "The lion is, on one level, essentially a model of the qualities that are unfortunately lacking in the knights of the Round Table," Milnes explains.²² It does not seem to be too far-fetched to search for a symbolic meaning for this friendship of Iwein with the lion, for Reto Bezzola wrote recently: "Wir wissen ja heute, dass im Mittelalter jede Form, jede Geste, jede Haltung in Kunst und Leben eine tiefe doppelte Bedeutung besass."²³

In Iwein's next "âventiure," his fight against the giant Harpin, the "hûsherre" of the castle (Iwein 4441) reacts very positively to the appearance of the knight with the lion. In fact he considers Iwein a courtly knight because of the lion:

er dûhtes biderbe unde guot
und in alle wîs ein hövesch man.
daz kurn sî dar an
daz der lewe bî im lac
und anders sites niene pflac
niuwan als ein ander schâf (Iwein 4812-17).

²¹Sacker, 16: "A knight, in this work, is a highly educated human being, a lion is an innately moral animal; King Artus' court is full of knights, the wild herdsman has control over animals--but only in Iwein are both aspects of human nature integrated."

²²Milnes, 253f--Milnes' and Sacker's interpretations of the lion's meaning appear more adequate to the text than that of A. T. Hatto who states: "The lion is Christ," p. 97f ("Der aventiure meine in Hartmann's Iwein," Medieval German Studies (London, 1965).

²³Liebe und Abenteuer im höfischen Roman (Hamburg, 1961), p. 13.

(This passage in which the wild animal also proclaims Iwein's mastership relates immediately back to the "waldmensch"-scene.) Iwein starts the day of the fight by attending mass (Iwein 4821) according to the chivalrous behavior pattern, a factor which may be taken to refer to Iwein's resuming the responsibilities of his knighthood again. Through the tale of the mishaps at the Arthurian Court which is inserted into the account of this adventure, the courtly world as a frame of reference is again brought back into focus. Thus the cruel picture of the giant torturing four young knights is simply called "grôze unhövescheit" (Iwein 4919); this understatement brings forth the disparity between the two worlds referred to. The fight as such is short but severe and Iwein is only successful because his lion has followed him into the fight (Iwein 4990), and the lion revenges his master when Iwein threatens to succumb from the giant's heavy blow. Thus, only with the lion's help does Iwein succeed in killing the giant and in saving the knights' lives. In his rapid departure from this castle, Iwein does not give his name but:

daz ein lewe mit mir sî:
dâ erkennet er (Gâwein) mich bî (Iwein 5125f).

The company of the lion is to replace Iwein's name--this is how Iwein establishes his new identity as the knight with the lion.

Iwein hurries to his next fight in order to fulfill another plea for help. This time it is Lunete in need of him who has been responsible for her distress. He arrives in time, but the fight against the three opponents is delayed since they insist that he get rid of his lion. Iwein refuses to part with him ("der leu vert mit mir alle zît," Iwein 5293), but he finally has to make the lion step back. The fight starts on

horseback with lances, proceeds on foot, the lances are exchanged for the swords--the usual fighting pattern is given ("als in diu gwonheit lêrte," Iwein 5329). Iwein's opponents are even referred to as "guote rîter" (Iwein 5345) or it is said:

ouch wâren sî niuwet zagen
die dâ mit im vâhten,
wande sî in brâhten
in vil angestlîche nôt (Iwein 5362-65).

These lines simply stress that not only is Iwein a brave fighter but so are his opponents brave, and thus the fierceness of the fight is underlined. At a difficult spot in the fight, the lion jumps in to Iwein's aid; he eventually gets wounded in the struggle and this increases Iwein's enraged strength so that he gains the final victory, once again with the lion's help (Iwein 5416ff).

Under concealed identity ("ich heize der rîter mittem leun," Iwein 5502), the new fame of Iwein has spread so that he is now searched for by those in need of help. Thus the younger daughter of the "grâve von dem Swarzen dorne" (Iwein 5629) who failed to find assistance in Arthur's Court, is looking for him: "Man sagt von im die manheit" (Iwein 5827), and she is told that, indeed, "manheit" and helping others are his characteristics (Iwein 5834ff). Or, as Lunete puts it:

ez ist an sîme lîbe gar
swaz ein rîter haben sol (Iwein 5912f).

The distressed young lady, when she finally encounters Iwein, asks for his grace. His reply reveals two traits typical for him:

er sprach 'ichn habe gnâden niht:
 swem mîns dienstes nôt geschiht
 und swer guoter des gert,
 dern wirt es niemer entwert.' (Iwein 6001-04).

Iwein has kept his modesty in spite of his successes. He is not the god people seem to think (the first line quoted has the double meaning of his not having any grace for himself nor any to give away), and he readily offers his service to those in need if it is a good cause. Sacker's comment to this text passage reads: "Iwein's reply to her request for help is revealing of his present attitude to adventure. . . . Iwein's calm statement of a qualification--'und swer guotes des gert'--contrasts him possibly with Artus. . . and certainly with Gawein, who is at present committed to championing a lady whom he knows to be in the wrong."²⁴

Before Iwein is able to defend the cause of this girl, however, he still has to fight the two giants in the "boumgarten" (Iwein 6436). His opponents here are armored as well as if they had to fight an entire army (Iwein 6677ff), yet they insist that the lion not participate in the fight, but be locked into a cage. As soon as the fight starts it becomes obvious that Iwein will not be able to sustain the attacks of his two opponents very long; "sîn manheit und sîn sin" (Iwein 6731) make it possible at all that he is not killed immediately. The lion who frees himself from his cage rescues Iwein now from extreme danger:

sît er in erlôste
 kom er im nû ze trôste (Iwein 6769f).

²⁴ Sacker, 21.

Finally the knight and his lion defeat the two giants. As a prize for this fight, Iwein demands that the three hundred suffering women captured in this castle be freed. Thus the adventure proves again to be of altruistic nature.

Although it has become apparent in the previous fights, this last one mentioned leaves no doubt that Iwein could not have defeated his opponents without his lion. This means, in other words, that Iwein as an Arthurian Knight only, would have failed. His new personality, however, is able to cope with tasks that exceed the limits of the typical courtly Arthurian Knight.

Before the final dual in Iwein is studied closely, a word must be said about Chrétien's Yvain. There is only one important addition in Hartmann's Iwein in so far as the image of the Arthurian Knight is concerned: the "Krautjunker"-passage. From a passing line in Yvain that a hero should not degenerate for the sake of women (Yvain 2484-86), Hartmann developed the humorous portrait of the degenerated knight.

2c. The final fight in Iwein

There is little doubt about the marked importance of the final Arthurian fight as far as the structure of Iwein is concerned. The description of the fight (with its preliminaries and its eventual outcome) comprises almost a thousand lines (Iwein 6877-7780), thereby taking up a considerable part of the work. Moreover, the narration of minor chivalrous adventures at the beginning of the work and the account of Iwein's more and more serious and deadly fights build up to inevitably high expectations for this final duel. It seems, therefore, important to study the procedure of this fight in great detail.

Iwein enters the "kampfstat" (Iwein 6883) of this fight with the younger of the two quarreling sisters while the older sister is already at the scene. Then Gawein, Iwein's opponent in this fight, is introduced:

her Gâwein, der sich helen bat,
 der hete sich selben sô verholn
 und hete sich vor enwec gestoln,
 und hörten in des alle jehn,
 ern möhte den kampf niht gesehn
 vor ander unmüezekheit (Iwein 6884-89).

There are no laudatory adjectives praising this valiant knight's superb values but the dry statement that he asks to be hidden and that he, stealing away from the spectators, has already hidden himself. The emphasis on "helen" underlines the concealed identity of the two combatants which alone renders this particular fight possible. Gawein's behavior also becomes quite unchivalrous when he publicly adds a false excuse for his disappearance. If taken literally this excuse is not a lie since he cannot look at the fight while he is engaged in this "unmüezekheit" himself, but it is still a misleading double talk. He thereupon reappears on the scene in a different armor so that nobody recognizes him.

Iwein has left his lion behind for this particular fight: "ern wolt in niht zem kampfê hân" (Iwein 6904). There are no other reasons given why Iwein goes without him, yet it is the first time that he dispenses with the lion on his own initiative. If this gesture appears contradictory at first glance it becomes plausible when the lion's function and symbolic meaning is considered. For it is obvious that

Iwein is fully aware that he approaches an Arthurian fight and he therefore acts precisely as an Arthurian Knight, nothing else.

When the two knights on horseback proceed to ride "in einen rinc" (Iwein 6907) the Arthurian company, which has just been described as having a keen interest in watching the fight (Iwein 6898f), breaks out into lamentations in view of the possible death of one of the two combatants; for they had never seen:

zwêne rîter gestalt
sô gar in Wunsches gewalt
an dem lîbe und an den sîten (Iwein 6915-17).

Iwein and Gawein in their appearance and behavior obviously represent the image the courtly society has of a perfect Arthurian Knight. Thus the audience implores the King to intervene and avoid the superfluous duel for the heritage. The older sister's ill-mannered reply, however, cuts the King off short (Iwein 6922f). So Arthur simply proceeds to open the fight officially (Iwein 6931).

Instead of a fight description some general remarks follow about the unbearable situation ("ein starkez dinc," Iwein 6932) and that it is so hard for the audience to watch

. . . ein vehten
von zwein sô guoten knehten (Iwein 6933f).

It is, moreover, equally hard for the two fighters, so the text continues, for a respectable man would not want to see his opponent die. He would be left with the paradox that he would be pleased to see the other one survive, the implication being that he hopes for his own

defeat (Iwein 6935ff). This general statement is applied to the present fight by means of a repetition of terms and added demonstratives:

machet ich ditz vehten
von disen guoten knehten
mit worten vil spaehe,
waz töhte diu waehe? (Iwein 6939-42).

The rhetorical question doubts or almost denies that it is worthwhile to describe this fight, yet without ever hesitating the fight immediately thereafter is pictured "mit worten." This cliché or topos²⁵ represents an initial paradox in a series of paradoxical statements that can be encountered during the long duel. A new description of the two opponents reads as follows: they have never been cowards; they are the two best fighters in this world; they are wearing the crown of chivalrous honors and are still striving for more honor. The last is the most lamentable because of the paradox involved:

daz ich ez gote immer clage
daz die besten gesellen
ein ander kempfen wellen
die iender lebten bî der zît (Iwein 6956-59).

Even God should be made aware of such an atrocity that two companions, the best friends alive, are all set to fight.²⁶ Theoretically, so the text continues, the possible results of such a paradoxical fight are:

²⁵

Cf. Ernst Robert Curtius, Europäisches Mittelalter (Bern, 1954), p. 168ff.: "Unsagbarkeitstopoi".

²⁶

Xenja von Ertzdorff in "Höfische Freundschaft," Deutschener-richt, XIV, no. 6 (1962), 37 explains: "die ritterliche Freundschaft . . . des höfischen Romans (erwächst) aus der . . . Kampfgemeinschaft, die zu gegenseitigem Rat und Beistand verpflichtet."

death of one partner would be "êwigez clagen" (Iwein 6964) for the other one; there could also be two victors or two without a victory; or they could just quit and not fight at all which would be for them, after a mutual recognition, "daz liebest und daz beste" (Iwein 6971). Implicitly it is stated, then, that this fight should not take place, and that this might have been the fighters' opinion as well if they were not blinded (Iwein 6974ff). The explanation of the partners' unawareness of each other's identity may be accepted partly as an excuse that makes such a paradox possible but partly it aggravates the seriousness of the situation when the two friends fail to recognize each other in danger.

There is a slight ironical touch in the lines that follow. The text has mentioned that the fighters wait on horseback, obviously ready to fight, but nothing has been heard of them since except a narrative digression about their present problematic situation. Even Arthur's official opening of the duel has apparently not moved them. Yet they are now pictured as very eager to fight as if they certainly could not wait any longer since they are just in the right position for a ready attack. A first step of the duel is actually described:

ir ietweder rûmde
dem andern sînen puneiz
von im vaste unz an den kreiz (Iwein 6984-86).

The two knights make room for each other by retreating to the edge of the circular fighting area, thus gaining the proper distance to lance the first blow. But nothing else happens. Hans J. Bayer in talking about this scene states: "Man hat den Eindruck als komme es Hartmann mehr auf die Spannung vor dem Kampf als auf diesen selbst an, und das

Gebärdenspiel erinnert an die unzähligen Duellkarikaturen: es bleibt bei den Gebärden, bei der überlieferten Formel.²⁷

A new remark about the excellence of the two knights, whose fighting skill has been superb since childhood, leads to a digression about the importance of constant practice for the courtly knight:

ez lêret diu gewonheit
einen zagehaften man
daz er getar unde kan
baz vehten danne ein küener degn
der es niht hât gepflegn (Iwein 6998-7002).

Constant training can even teach a coward to become more daring and skilled in his fighting than a brave warrior who lacks practice. These lines once again undermine the whole idea of trial by combat as it has been shown to be apparent in the Arthurian Knight's incessant search for adventure. The text here suggests that the outcome does not depend on individual excellence but that anyone with training could be successful.

After this short digression the account of the duel is resumed again. "Nune sûnden siz niht mêre" (Iwein 7009) leaves the impression that nothing can detain the knights any longer from a fierce fight, but again scarcely anything happens. They are shown to behave as if they were enemies ("vîentlîche gebâren," Iwein 7013); whereas in fact, and the paradox is repeated again, they are "gesellen".

The form and the object of the long digression that follows in the account at this point will be discussed later. Relevant here is

²⁷ Untersuchungen zum Sprachstil weltlicher Epen (Berlin, 1962), p. 107.

only the fact that it deals with repetitions of the strong opposition "minne unde haz" (Iwein 7021) and its continuous intensification. The argument has only been loosely connected with the duelling knights in the sense that they are those in whom dwells love and hate simultaneously and that they are not aware of it; their "unkünde" (Iwein 7055) may explain the situation but not remove the clashing opposition. In fact, the following lines give a new set of repeated paradoxical statements:

Daz sî gevriunt von herzen sint
und mit gesehenden ougen blint.
sî [unkünde] wil daz ein geselle
den anderen velle (Iwein 7057-60).

The image of two intimate friends being blind with seeing eyes appears especially strong. Their seeing blindness refers back to an earlier description of the two opponents:

jane wâren sî niht geste
des willen, sam der ougen (Iwein 6972f).

Again it is not merely a repetition but rather an intensification of previous lines. When the possible end of this paradoxical fight is considered once again the more intricate complexity of the lines in comparison with the earlier passage suggests an increased difficulty in the situation of the fight:

wan sweder ir den sige kôs,
der wart mit sige sigelôs.
in hât unsaelec getân
aller sîner saelden wân:
er hazzet daz er minnet,
und vliuset so er gewinnet (Iwein 7069-74).

The end of the quote here adds a new opposition to the ones already encountered which, as usual, consists of a juxtaposition of two terms directly contrasting in their meaning, as for instance the clashing union of love with hate, or of loss with gain. The preceding lines, however, appear to follow a different pattern; they are word plays with "sige" and "saelde." The meaning of these lines is an expression of utter frustration. Someone strives for victory and by gaining victory he is defeated; his mind all set on happiness he becomes unhappy. One term is refuted by the same term used negatively: "mit sige sigelôs," and "unsaelec" confronted with "saelden wân." These contradictions within the same term express the pointlessness of the fight. A new theme has been introduced here, and its point will become more obvious as the account of the duel continues: the futility of the fight.

The text leads back then to the two opponents, and the account starts at the very point of the knights behaving like enemies. The following scene now gives a detailed description of what is happening between them: lowering their lances, the fighters run against each other aiming at their chests. Their posture during this act is precisely the correct one:

sine bürten noch ensancten
 enweder ze nider noch ze hô,
 niuwan ze rehter mâze alsô
 als ez wesen solde (Iwein 7080-84).

The knights are holding their lances neither too high nor too low. The repeated neither-nor statements narrow down the partners' movements to an inflexible and highly stylized way of fighting: they do nothing

except to act in the proper way, as it ought to be conventionally. Besides this marked conventionality in the fighters' behavior they appear to have an almost mirror-like duel. Never is anything said about one of them; it is always "they." The repetitious use of "ir ietweder" in this scene draws special attention to this fact. Not only are their intentions alike when they try to throw each other on the ground, but each of their mutual blows succeeds equally well. They each come close to falling yet each one remains on horseback. Each of them also has his lance broken into a hundred pieces (Iwein 7085ff). It is appropriate in this fight then--this point is clearly made in the text--to act in complete conformity with the conventions. Any individual achievement would be out of place. And the full approval of the audience sanctions this combat as a perfect Arthurian duel:

und daz mǎnlich dā jach
ern gesaehe schoener tjost nie (Iwein 7104f).

The puppet-like actions of the two partners in their complete equality and their absolute conformity to the conventional rules appear to account for this superb joust.

The speed with which the fighters break their lances keeps the boys running with new supplies:

man hōrte niht wan ein geschrei,
'wā nū sper? wā nū sper?
ditz ist hin, ein anderz her' (Iwein 7110-12).

This quote, in which the mirror-like effect of the fight is obvious again, represents the liveliest scene by far in the entire account, mainly due, of course, to the shouting given in direct speech and the

abrupt questions repeated to express the double urgent need for new lances. The fighting then proceeds with swords, and to spare the horses they dismount:

von diu was in beiden nôt
daz sî die dörperheit vermiten
und daz sî ze vuoze striten (Iwein 7120-22).

They consider it necessary to fight on foot in order to avoid "die dörperheit."²⁸ An uncultivated behavior, most incongruous with the courtly etiquette, has to be avoided at all costs, it seems. Yet while they show kindness to the horses, they are not equally considerate to the opponent, for "sî liezenz an den lîp gân" (Iwein 7124).

Their ensuing fight (Iwein 7125ff) shows their equal skill and identical behavior again. As if to show now the long duration of their mutual giving and receiving of blows during their fight, a lengthy digression on "borgen" and "gelten" is inserted (Iwein 7140-70). At first sight this passage looks simply like a sophisticated word play on those two terms or their derivations, but a clear textual structure emerges again at a closer look. The first half is a general discussion on borrowing and returning the borrowed object, an image for receiving and giving back: whoever likes to pay back may well borrow, but if he borrows without repaying he easily suffers for it:

wand ers dicke engiltet
swer borc niene giltet (Iwein 7155f).

Whoever does not return the borrowed good is strongly at a disadvantage.

²⁸This term, derived from "dörper" or "tölpel", means "bäuerlich rohes benehmen," cf. Lexer.

Three times "swer" has been used to mark the observation as generally applicable, each of the three statements becomes more powerful in contents. Starting with a playful like or dislike of receiving and returning, the consideration goes to a possible suffering if one fails to respond, and ends with the threat of a strong disadvantage in the case of a failure to respond adequately. No such failure is conceivable, however, when the two fighting knights are taken into direct focus in the second half of the passage. Each of them has to pay back plentifully in order to defeat death and dishonor:

si entlihen bēde ûz voller hant,
 und wart nâch gelte niht gesant:
 wand sî heten ûf daz velt
 beide brâht ir übergelt
 unde vergulden an der stat
 mē und ê dan man sî bat (Iwein 7165-70).

Since the focal point has switched to the knights the verb "borgen" is omitted entirely, and "entlîhen" is used instead, thus representing the two opponents both in the active role of the creditor rather than passively as debtors: they both hand out loans without keeping count, and there is no lack of repayments. Their excellence in fighting is thus represented through the intensified usage of "gelten" in "übergelt" and "vergelten" and through the final comparative line: they repay more than they are asked for and do so earlier than expected. The repetitious use of "beide" and of "ir ietweder" points again to the equal, mirror-like behavior of the opponents. The entire digression which evokes the image of a creditor and a debtor is given here not in order to show one man's indebtedness to and dependence on the other man but to demonstrate the

opposite: the two fighters owe nothing to each other; neither is superior to the other because they are equal. Thus a new point is made in addition: the two knights have nothing to lend each other, no imbalance to set right; neither one is a creditor or a debtor. The image used to symbolize the equal skill of the fighters further provides a new insight; that is, it reveals the pointlessness of the fight.

The text following this digressive word play marks an abrupt change of subject (Iwein 7171-88). Through "gewin" and "koufe" this passage is only loosely connected to the preceding one. The remainder of the text is quite disconnected and seems to maintain an eminent position within its wider context for it abandons almost all imagery and there is no mention of the actual fighting, either:

verlegeniu müezekheit
 ist gote unde der werlte leit:
 dane lât sich ouch niemen an
 niuwan ein verlegener man.
 swer gerne lebt nâch êren,
 der sol vil starke kêren
 Alle sîne sinne
 nach eteslichem gwinne,
 dâ mit der sich wol bejage
 und ouch vertrîbe die tage.
 alsus heten sî getân:
 ir leben was niht verlân
 an deheine müezekheit (Iwein 7171-83).

The first couplet gives the theme of this paragraph in a maxime-like statement: "verlegeniu müezekheit" is a sore in the eyes of God and men. Semantically this term relates to the turning point in Erec and it equally recalls the "Krautjunker"-image in Iwein. The passage deals then with this sententious statement in general terms: nobody would sink so low as to be idle except when he is "ein verlegener man." The

similarity in the meaning of the two terms (they both imply idleness) is brought out, but also the cause-and-effect relationship. Then follows a safe remedy against such a deplorable disgrace: whoever intends to live an honorable life ("lebt nâch êren" is clearly used as the opposite of "verlegenu müezekheit") has to strive for honor with all his mind; searching to gain honor is a good way to spend one's life. With "alsus heten sî getân", the two combatents are now taken into focus: they have acted precisely like honorable men should; their lives have nothing in common with "müezekheit"; they both dislike any day that does not increase their honor (Iwein 7184-88). In short, the attitude of the two duelling knights stands in a marked contrast to disgraceful idleness. Moreover, the mere threat of "müezekheit" may induce any Arthurian Knight to enter a duel. For the Arthurian society (cf. "got" and "werlt") seems to hate nothing more than the dishonorable inactivity of "ein verlegener man."

This text passage may then quite easily explain why Gawein represents the unjust cause in this particular duel: he is the Arthurian Knight who strives to gain honor in order to avoid the most hateful idleness. The duel with a potential victory for him is enough reason to start fighting; he need not ask for any other underlying causes. If a similar motivation for the fight here were applied to Iwein it obviously would not do him justice. When Iwein as an Arthurian Knight exceeded his leave from Laudine he was, indeed, engaged in courtly jousts for the sake of not becoming "ein verlegener man." Yet after his experience in the forest, Iwein has been anything but "müezec." He has risked his life many times in serious fights for good causes, and he has gained more honor than seems possible for one man--without outright seeking for adventure. Iwein,

therefore, has long since abandoned the present sort of "unmüezekheit" he is engaged in; it thus becomes obvious here that the present duel is a regression for Iwein. Moreover, there is a hint of irony when the two knights are again made to seem equal in this particular passage by usages such as "ir leben," "in . . . beiden" and "sî." So far the strong expressions of their equality concerned their courage and skill, but not so any longer. "Verlegenu müezekheit" which may represent Gawein's negative incentive for the duel cannot help but recall Iwein's entire story. To say then that both their lives have not degenerated "an deheine müezekheit" without hinting at their individual differences in abstaining from this disgraceful indolence represents irony and reveals suddenly a huge disparity between the two knights.

The following text passage (Iwein 7189ff) picks up the earlier "borgen-gelten" image representing the two fighters as skilled merchants with very odd business manners:

dehein koufman hete ir site,
 ern verdurbe dâ mite:
 dâ wurden sî rîche abe.
 si entlihen niemen ir habe,
 in enwaere leit, galt er in (Iwein 7197-7201).

They are not handing out loans in the hope of being paid back; yet, although every other salesman would get bankrupt doing so, they increase their wealth. The image is immediately applied and explained: their loans consist of heavy blows they give with their weapons, and "des wuohs ir êre und ir heil" (Iwein 7208). By demonstrating their skill and courage and their courtly upbringing in the art of fighting to a point of perfection, the two knights accumulate honor in the eyes of the world

("êre) and of God ("heil"). Thus fitting completely within the entire realm of the courtly society, the duel is defined as an Arthurian fight.

A new reference to the image of lending and repaying leads to the description of the knights as they appear now:

die helme wurden eteswâ
vil sêre verschrôten,
daz die meilen rôten
von bluote begunden,
wande sî vil wunden
in kurzer stunt enpfiengen,
die niht ze verhe giengen (Iwein 7228-34).

The combatants are actually cutting into each other's helmets so that blood begins to show. The gradual enhancement from "die schilte" (7219) to "daz îsen" (7223) to "der lîp" and the actual mentioning of bloody wounds appear at first sight quite incongruous with the quality of this duel as seen so far. It almost sounds as if the fighters were suddenly entering a serious fight, but then the text reads: even though there may be many of them, the wounds are not serious; "daz verch" ("der sitz des körperlichen lebens"²⁹) has never been touched. The blows they give each other are just enough to cause wounds but never endanger the partner's life.

The fight has lasted since morning until well into the afternoon and the blows have become ineffective. The first indications of exhaustion make the knights fear for their honor (Iwein 7244f); it is notably not a fear to lose their causes. They both agree to rest a while:

29

Cf. Lexer.

ez wart dâ von in beiden
 ein vil gemüetlich scheiden,
 und satzten sich ze ruowe hie
 unz sî diu müede verlie (Iwein 7247-50).

They separate quite pleasantly and sit down together waiting for their present weakness to pass. Such a move, which is not unusual in the typically courtly fight as was seen in Erec, would have been inconceivable in any of Iwein's previous fights. Had Iwein felt tiredness overcome him in fighting his opponents then, he would have gathered his last strength to deal the deadly blow. But not so in this duel where the "gemüetlich scheiden" does not even appear incongruous with their mode of fighting. They very shortly resume their fighting which has even improved as is said in comparative forms:

ir slege wâren kreftec ê,
 nû kreftiger, und wart ir mê (Iwein 7259f).

And now the complete equality of the two duelling knights is clearly expressed from the perspective of the audience. Many men well-versed in the art of fighting are present among the spectators, yet none of them, if he took an oath upon saying the truth, could possibly decide which of the two combatants is better. There is absolutely no difference between the partners, not even "alsô grôz als umb ein hâr" (Iwein 7269). Their fight is completely equal and as such unique in the audience's experience: "ezn wart nie glîcher kampf gesehn" (Iwein 7272). The spectators are puzzled about such an unprecedented fight and fear that one or--more likely in their equality--the two knights will have to die. Arthur intervenes but fails. And even though the younger sister then offers to withdraw her claims no settlement is

reached until night. Still neither of the knights has shown the slightest superiority over the other: "und stuont noch ûf der wâge ir leb'n" (Iwein 7346). The scales that measure the excellence in fighting prove the partners' perfect equality.

Until the next morning the knights intend to rest. Having learned to respect each other they are eager to find out each other's identity. The first one to speak up is Iwein who has not been quoted saying anything since his arrival on the fighting scene. This suggests that Iwein has left behind (besides his lion) a part of his personality, that of an essential human communication. His tongue has been tied so that only now he may say what he wants after they have finally given up their hateful pastime:

er sprach 'wir haben et verlân
unser hâzlîchez spil:
ich mac nû sprechen swaz ich wil (Iwein 7378-80) .

Iwein thus refers to their duel as "hâzlîchez spil", and this oxymoron aptly reflects the characteristic of the present fight.³⁰ It has been a game rather than a serious fight of the sort Iwein fought earlier; but as a game it has not been pleasant. The paradox of their duel is further brought out again through Iwein's long speech (Iwein 7381ff): he has up to then cherished the clear active days and abhorred the sad long nights but now everything has been perverted ("verkêret") since

³⁰ Hennig Brinkmann (Zu Wesen und Form mittelalterlicher Dichtung. Halle, 1928) has found that Hartmann is the first one to introduce "den Vergleich des Kampfes mit einem Spiel" (p. 123).

this night has saved his honor. And, ironically, he has to be afraid of the next day when again he has to fight "Den aller tiuresten man / des ich ie künde gewan" (Iwein 7417f). The opposition of the day-and-night image is intensified into a direct opposition of his present situation when he is obliged to fight the most excellent knight he has ever known. This insight indicates that the combatants themselves, although not yet knowing each other's identity, have been aware of their paradoxical predicament during their fight.

Gawein's response contains just one more example of their equality:

die rede die ir habent getân
die wolt ich gesprochen hân (Iwein 7435f).

Then follows a replica of Iwein's speech containing similar oppositions and also emphasizing his dilemma. After they then give their names, their mutual feelings are described with a new opposition:

dô wonte under in zwein
liebe bî leide (Iwein 7484f).

The love between the two best companions is overshadowed by their present suffering about their inimical behavior earlier. The earlier opposition about love and hatred is now directly referred to with a slight variation:

beide trûren und haz
rûnten gâhes daz vaz,
und rîchseten drinne
vreude unde minne (Iwein 7491-94).

Upon their recognition, sadness and hatred leave and joy and love take over. The earlier insoluble paradox of this image has now been cleared and thus the fight has ended. The fact that a previous crucial image is resumed to explain the present situation indicates the tight structure of this account of the duel. The emotionally heightened impact of the present scene comes out through "trûren" and "vreude" besides hate and love. In their extreme joy about their recognition, the two knights run into each other's arms, and the scene ends with the account of the two friends' innumerable kisses all over their faces (the reciprocal verb "under-küssen" here points again to their equal behavior):

sî underkusten tûsentstunt
ougen wangen unde munt (Iwein 7503f).

These lines must perhaps be understood as a cliché. But the cliché appears here in an inappropriate context for only a few lines later it is stated that the knights' helmets are still covering their faces (Iwein 7517f). Thus nobody else can recognize them, nor would they then have been able to kiss each other. The question arises why a cliché is used at such a crucial scene, and perhaps an answer may be given in view of the entire description of the duel.

The account of the final fight has been characterized by frequent paradoxes, by the fighters' equal skill that hinted at the futility of the whole combat, and also by complete conventionality in the knights' behavior. Each step of the duel, as was seen, has happened precisely as it was supposed to. Had the fighters not from the beginning carefully followed a given behavior pattern, it would not have come to such

a futile and paradoxical fight. Thus Iwein has left behind his lion; they have not mentioned their names; they have not spoken together; even their mode of fighting has followed given rules. Therefore the present use of a highly conventional form of the language, which consists in this case of an inappropriate cliché, reveals in retrospect the emptiness of the conventional forms and the absurdity of observing them.

King Arthur and the Queen wonder at the sudden strange behavior of the two supposed enemies. Their questions, however, are completely ignored (Iwein 7505ff). Instead Iwein and Gawein continue their exalted conversation. Iwein wants to give all honor to his friend and declares that God knows "daz ich sigelôs bin" (Iwein 7565). As was to be expected, Gawein replies with almost the same phrase: "der sigelôse der bin ich" (Iwein 7578). Since they each claim to be defeated they have become, in a slightly twisted sense, "mit sige sigelôs." A reference to this earlier phrasing seems to be implied here. Their arguments continue for a while without any solution. It is a shortened replica of the duel with the same paradoxes involved, only that it is a "vriunt-lîcher strît" (Iwein 7592). Finally the King gets an explanation from Gawein which states again the paradox of the two friends fighting each other. Gawein now admits that he has been aware all along that he has been fighting for an unjust cause and therefore God would have granted the victory to Iwein had the day lasted longer. Iwein feels embarrassed about this praise, yet his anger is a friendly one. It is a moderation of the previous hate: "hie was zorn âne haz" (Iwein 7642).

After the fight both with weapons and with words is thus finished, the King settles the dispute, and the courtly society is ready to relax, when a great uproar is caused by the sudden appearance of the lion.

nû waz der leu ûz komen,

 und jagte ûf sînes herren vart,
 unz si in zuo in sâhen
 dort über velt gâhen.
 do bestuont dâ niemen mære:
 sî vorhten in sô sêre.
 dâ vlôch man unde wîp
 durch behalten den lîp (Iwein 7727-36).

This description evokes a rather grotesque picture: the very exquisite group of the courtly society with the King and Queen are suddenly seen running clear across the field in fear of a lion. Only Iwein's assurance that they would not be harmed brings them back:

'ern tuot iu dehein ungemach:
 er ist mîn vriunt und suohet mich' (Iwein 7738f).

This couplet immediately recalls the "walttôr" as he answers Kalogreant:

. . . niene vûrhte dih:
 sine tuont dir bî mir dehein leit' (Iwein 517f).

The comparison between the two situations may be seen as follows: Kalogreant facing the beasts and the Arthurian company fleeing from the lion are afraid when confronting the real world and escape is their only answer. The decisive difference in these two instances is introduced through Iwein. For he, as the lion's friend, is the representative of reality in this case, and yet he still, as an Arthurian Knight, can actually communicate with Gawein. This makes Iwein a mediator between reality and the Arthurian unreality.

After the lion's appearance only is Iwein's true identity established (Iwein 7740ff). Gawein seems quite shocked that Iwein is, indeed, the

knight with the lion he has searched for, and that he has fought the very person he is so deeply grateful to. Only now does he realize the full impact of Iwein's complex personality: "ich erkenne iuch bî dem lewen wol" (Iwein 7762). These words, the last ones of Gawein quoted in the work, mean not only Gawein's recognition of "der rîter mittem leun" (Iwein 7753), but imply his full appreciation and acceptance of the complexity of Iwein who has through his lion-relationship surpassed any given courtly conventions.

Detailed discussion of the final fight in Iwein has been offered to clarify its eminent importance in the work. The lengthy description of the fight where word plays and rhetorical devices are used to represent the duel by means of the language itself,³¹ make this fight excel all the others that have been studied in both Erec and Iwein. For the structure of Iwein the significance of this fight may be understood as follows: Iwein has departed from the Arthurian society, he has become the "edele tôr" and later the well-renowned knight with the lion. He undergoes a series of deadly combats that correspond with his inner development. The final fight is the highpoint at which he is reunited with the Arthurian society. And it is in this respect that this fight gains most of its importance, or as Sparnaay sees it: "Die schwerste Probe, die Iwein auferlegt wird, ist aber der Zweikampf mit Gawein, dem Muster-ritter."³² The final duel represents a difficult test for Iwein in so

³¹Sacker, 22: "The stupidity and tediousness of this pointless and inconclusive duel between friends is expressed appropriately in the long-winded conceits, combining perfection of form with fatuity of content, with which the narrator supplements and to some extent replaces a description of the fighting."

³²"Hartmanns Iwein," Zur Sprache und Literatur des Mittelalters (Groningen, 1961), p. 218.

far as his great prowess is now being checked against his own frame of reference, the Arthurian Knighthood. In his confrontation with the exemplary Arthurian Knight Gawein, Iwein experiences the courtly chivalrous values at their best, yet he proves to be absolutely equal when he has fought only with part of his personality. Arthur and his Court accept Iwein with open arms, but Iwein has become a human being much too complex for an Arthurian society to incorporate. After his honor in the eyes of the Court is restored, Iwein leaves the Arthurian society behind, for he has outgrown it. Wolfgang Harms says in this connection: "Der Ausgang der Szene zeigt, dass für Iwein nicht die *êre* der Artuswelt das letzte Ziel ist."³³

A comparison with this final Arthurian fight in Chrétien's work yields the fact that the basic features are already given in Yvain but that the text in Iwein has been considerably lengthened. What was added mainly is the abundance of word plays, although some--like the one on love and hatred--already occur in Yvain. Again, the emphasis of the description in Chrétien lies on the fighting as such and its immediate results, as one example will show:

Car des pons si granz cos se donent
 Sor les hiaumes, que tuit s'estonent
 Et par po qu'il ne s'escervellent.
 Li oel des chiés lor estancelent;
 Qu'il ont les poinz quarrez et gros
 Et forz les ners et durs les os,
 Si se donent males groigniees
 Les espees, qui grant aie
 Lor font, quant il fierent a hie (Yvain 6139-48).

³³

Der Kampf mit dem Freund (München, 1963), p. 132.

The text in Iwein suggests the possibilities of the facts mentioned here but it does not spell out such details. It rather concentrates on playing with conceits and paradoxes and on giving theoretical observation, as was seen in this section of the paper.

Concluding this chapter on the image of the Arthurian Knight in Erec and Iwein, another word must be said about the role of Keii. He is represented much more critically in Hartmann's work than in Chrétien, and it has been mentioned earlier that he must be considered a misfit belonging to the Arthurian Court. Besides his obvious function to serve as a contrast figure in the Arthurian society, his importance as the keeper of courtly values has been pointed out. His relationship with Erec and Iwein remains to be glanced at shortly.

Erec's short encounter with the Arthurian company has been mentioned earlier. Keii serves as Arthur's messenger in inviting Erec to stay but Erec refuses. The ensuing fight in which Erec uses dull weapons is an open insult to Keii who ends up, moreover, falling from his horse "rehte sam ein sac" (Erec 4730). A very similar fight is related in Iwein. Keii had specifically asked the King for the first joust at the well, yet also here Iwein pushes him:

ûz dem satele als ein sac
daz ern weste wâ er lac (Iwein 2585f).

He really suffers from this fall, it is stated later, but nobody shows any sympathy; he serves "ze spotte in allen" (Iwein 2625). It is obvious, then, that Keii is not taken seriously by the other knights yet he is not

ignored, either. He may be considered a caricature of the Arthurian Knight who serves as a warning but simultaneously has a stimulating function in that his sharp tongue drives the knights to bigger efforts and more courage than they would invest without him (cf. Iwein 1530ff).

The various descriptions of the knights as given in Hartmann's courtly epics form a complex picture. Keii, brave only with his tongue, maintains the crucial function as the keeper of the proper standards of the chivalrous society. Gawein, the exemplary knight, is shown absent in the emergency of Ginover's abduction and fighting for an unjust cause at the end of Iwein. Thus even he is not without flaws. Erec and Iwein, on the other hand, neither of them perfect at the outset of the epics, develop into the most accomplished paragons of knighthood. However, it cannot be overlooked that both Erec and Iwein finally move away from the ideal world of the Arthurian Court and integrate the "real" world into their perfect chivalry. Thus they build a bridge between two worlds. In the perfection of these knights which is contrasted with the lack of perfection in the other courtly knights, the Arthurian Knight is implicitly criticized in both works. Brogsitter underlines this implied criticism that can be found in Hartmann but not yet in Chrétien: ". . . der deutsche Dichter (scheint sich) der Fragwürdigkeit eben dieser in einer ästhetischen Scheinwelt beheimateten Artusritter-Ideale stärker bewusst gewesen zu sein als sein unter anderen Verhältnissen schreibender französischer Vorgänger."³⁴

34

Brogsitter, p. 75.

IV. NARRATOR INTRUSIONS AND SOME ASPECTS OF THE MEDIEVAL LITERARY TRADITION

The main point the two previous chapters tried to establish is the fact that Hartmann in his two courtly epics, Erec and Iwein, is seen to throw some ironical light on King Arthur, the courtly society and the stereotype Arthurian Knight. He thus takes an objective and critical distance from the conventional Arthurian material as it was handed over to him. Such a critical attitude can also be noticed in the passages that will be dealt with briefly in this chapter.

Both in Erec and Iwein the narrator is almost constantly present, commenting on the plot he relates or asserting his inadequacy in rendering the tale properly. Yet, in addition, there are a few text passages where the narrator is actually cast as the fictitious Hartmann arguing his cause either with a fictitious audience or with the personified Minne figure who appears on the scene. These passages, "den Rahmen des in sich geschlossenen Handlungsgefüges sprengend," as Wolfgang Dittmann comments,¹ introduce a new level of reality which underlines their importance. The latter is intensified through the fact that the three instances that are especially relevant in this connection, that is Erec 7493-7525, Iwein 2970-3028 and Iwein 7015-7054, are additions to Chrétien's works.

The first passage is taken from the description of Enite's horse in Erec which comprises almost 500 lines and about which Schwietering states:

¹"Dune hâst niht wâr, Hartman!--Zum Begriff der wârheit in Hartmanns Iwein," in Festgabe für Ulrich Pretzel. Ed. Werner Simon. (Berlin, 1963), p. 152.

"der Dichter (lässt sich) zu . . . umfänglichen Abschweifungen hinreissen."²

Such a critical comment is easily understandable considering the very long and apparently pointless description, but still it is not a satisfying answer to the question why Erec would contain such an unnecessary element. A comparison with Chrétien's Erec et Enide (cf. 5268-5313) reveals, moreover, that Hartmann increases considerably the space devoted to painting the picture of this horse. The details covered by this description go from the shades of the horse's colors to its size; then the courage of this noble horse and its origin are mentioned; finally the exquisite workmanship of the saddle and the artist who created this masterpiece are discussed at length; the stories engraved on the saddle are told in details; and, at last, the "vürbüege" and other accessories of the horse are named. The entire description could be considered a deviation in so far as it is a large part of the work which is aesthetically not integrated into the otherwise tightly knit structure of Erec. On the other hand such an epic narration which is added only loosely to the actual plot of the poetic work stands within a long literary tradition. A reference to the poet's awareness of this tradition may be found in the allusion to "daz lange liet von Troiâ" (Erec 7546). Thus the present tale is put in line with the typical epic narrative style going back to Homer.

Yet it is not the literary cliché as such which has to be discussed here but rather the way in which it is used in Erec. For in the middle of the long narration, an unidentified fictitious listener, or perhaps the audience in general, interrupts the steady narrative stream.

² Schwietering, Die deutsche Dichtung des Mittelalters, p. 159.

The narrator has just announced that he is going to describe the saddle which he has never seen but has only read about, and that he wants to let his audience know, at least partly, how the saddle was made. After these long preliminaries he adds: "sô ich kurzlîchest kan" (Erec 7492). At this point he is interrupted:

'nû swîc, lieber Hartman:
ob ich ez errâte?'
ich tuon: nû sprechet drâte.
'ich muoz gedenken ê dar nâch.'
nû vil drâte: mir ist gâch.
'dunke ich dich danne ein wîser man?'
jâ ir. durch got, nû saget an.
'ich wil dir diz maere sagen.'
daz ander lâze ich iuch verdagen.
'er was guot hagenbüechîn,'
jâ. wâ von möhte er mære sîn?
'mit liehtem golde übertragen.'
wer mohte iuz doch rehte sagen?
'vil starke gebunden.'
ir habet ez rehte ervunden.
'dar ûf ein scharlachen.'
des mac ich wol gelachen.
'sehet daz ichz rehte errâten kan.'
jâ, ir sît ein weterwîser man (Erec 7493-7511).

This supposedly spontaneous interruption by the audience is a rhetorical device very peculiar to Hartmann, as van der Lee explains.³ The narrator is now cast as Hartman who is to discuss his own narration. Such a change of roles creates a new reality and facilitates an objective view on the current tale from the new perspective thus gained by the intruded Narrator.

³"Diese . . . direkte Frage des Publikums begegnet bei Hartmann häufig, während sie sonst nur bei Eilhart . . . vorkommt." Van der Lee, p. 119.

Essentially the entire interruption consists of a good-humored mockery of the traditional epic narration. The listener is obviously getting impatient; he says, in fact, that he wants to tell the long tale himself since he can easily guess how it continues. Hartman, the fictitious Narrator on the scene, permits him to guess if only he does not lose any time. His reluctance to let the listener take over is shown through his constant interruptions, very aptly exemplified by means of the stichometric dialogue. The listener succeeds in imitating the given form of "diz maere". He describes the saddle made out of three different materials one on top of the other; he carefully adds the stereotype attributes as "guot", or "lieht" for the gold, or "vil starke," in short, he gives a parody of the conventional epic narration. And the Narrator's responses in this text add to the parody of the scene: he first suffers the interruption, then he wonders what will result from this game, then appears to be astonished, and finally seems to admit that the story is correct. At last he turns to laughing and calling the listener ironically "ein weterwîser man", a laudatory comment which is given in response to the listener's question: "dunke ich dich danne ein wîser man?" but which, in this altered form, is obviously unrelated to the present subject matter. The dialogue ends with Hartman asserting that the listener's story has neither been right nor wrong but that it simply grew out of a childish imagination, and that it is proper for him alone to continue his narration. He implies, in referring to the listener's "kintlîcher wân" that he, in contrast, takes his tale seriously.

In talking about the medieval descriptive technique, as it can be found in Erec and Iwein, Paul Salmon states concerning the description of Enite's horse: "The whole is so long, so fantastic and so static" that it appears to be "already parodying systematic description."⁴ This cannot be the place to interpret in detail the entire 500 lines of the epic narration meant here, and Salmon has not done so, either. But as far as the present scene is concerned, that is the Narrator intruding to discuss his tale with a bored audience, the parody cannot be overlooked.

One of the passages to be discussed in Iwein is the intrusion of the fictitious Narrator summoned by vrou Minne. The context here is Iwein's departure from Laudine after he has just been married for two weeks. The only motivation for Iwein's leaving is Gawain who urges him to join the Arthurian society again, as was seen in the last chapter. Instead of now discussing the emotional aspect of the lovers' separation, the narrator dissociates himself and inserts here the conversation between the Narrator and Minne. What is important in the following text passage for the purposes of this paper is the attitude of the fictitious Narrator toward Minne.

The dialogue starts by Minne interrupting Hartman to ask him if he accuses King Arthur of separating the two lovers. Hartman insists that this is, indeed, the truth as he found it in his source. Minne, thereupon, accuses him of telling lies: "dune hâst niht wâr, Hartman" (Iwein 2982), and the two characters start an argument:

⁴"The Wild Man in Iwein and Medieval Descriptive Technique," Modern Language Review, LVI (1961), 522.

der strît was lanc undr uns zwein,
 unz sî mich brâhte ûf die vart
 daz ich ir nâch jehnde wart (Iwein 2984-84).

Hartman, after this quarrel is, at least, willing to explain what Minne has to say about the two lovers: they exchanged their hearts. This "hackneyed device of the times," as Milnes calls it ⁵, can be found both in Chrétien and in Hartmann, and in both Yvain and Iwein the narrators wonder about the consequences of such an exchange. Yet Hartmann carries it further from here. Having introduced vrou Minne he now describes a discussion of this cliché between Minne and the Narrator who "is cast as a literal-minded simpleton." ⁶ His supposedly naive question about the consequences of such an exchange of hearts makes fun of the cliché and parodies the concept of Minne as well:

dô sprach ich 'vrou Minne,
 nu bedunket mîne sinne
 daz mîn her Iwein sî verlorn,
 sît er sîn herze hât verkorn:
 wan daz gap im ellen unde kraft.
 waz touc er nû ze rîterschaft?
 er muoz verzagen als ein wîp,
 sît wîbes herze hât sîn lîp
 Und sî mannes herze hât:
 sô üebet sî manlîche tât
 und solde wol turnieren varn
 und er dâ heime dez hûs bewarn.
 mir ist zwære starke leit
 daz sich ir beider gwonheit
 mit wehsel sô verkêret hât:
 was nune wirt ir dewederes rât' (Iwein 2995-3010).

The mockery consists of taking the ideal courtly image of the lovers'

⁵ Milnes, 252.

⁶ Ibid.

exchanged hearts literally and imagining the real subsequent effects on the individual lovers. Their perverted attitudes are seen as a mock image of the typical lovers' constitution. Minne, in response, accuses Hartman of a sick mind, and she states very pointedly that he has never been in favor of her ("dichn ruorte nie mîn meisterschaft", 3015). Thus it is established--and it is never contradicted--that there is an obvious antagonism in the relationship between the Narrator and Minne. In now establishing her authority ("ich bin ez Minne . . . ,", 3016), she states categorically that it is well possible for men and women to exchange their hearts but not lose their individual competence, as the Narrator humorously pictures it in the passage quoted. With this pronouncement Minne disappears from the scene, but the Narrator, who claims he did not dare ask any further, states laconically: "daz wunder daz gesach ich nie" (3023). Thus he "sticks to his common-sense position"⁷ that nobody can live without a heart. And then the Narrator concludes this conversation with unconcealed irony admitting that Minne must be right; for although he has never seen such an exchange he does know that Iwein's prowess had not suffered.

Again this scene represents a new level of reality as was seen in the previous passage of Erec. In this case, its purpose is a dissociation from the courtly value of Minne and its conceited contents. The supposedly naive questioning of vrou Minne represents a parody of the whole concept of courtly love.⁸

⁷Ibid.

⁸Cf. also *ibid.*

The last passage of Iwein to be discussed in this chapter is the one already mentioned in the description of the final fight. The paradox of the two friends fighting each other is here represented in terms of the paradoxical union of love and hatred. Such a union may appear impossible, the narrator relates, but is, indeed, accomplished in this strange incident:

doch wonte in disem vazze
 minne bî hazze
 alsô daz minne noch haz
 gerûnden gâhes daz vaz (Iwein 7023-26).

"Daz vaz" referred to is the heart of each friend, as is explained later. This image has been adopted from Chrétien (cf. Yvain 6022ff) who already makes use of the paradox to picture the fatuous fight between the two friends. What is new in Hartmann's Iwein is the sudden shift of reality that takes place here when the fictitious Narrator intrudes in order to be addressed by vrou Minne:

'Ich waene, vriunt Hartman,
 dû missedenkest dar an.
 war umbe sprichestû daz
 daz beide minne unde haz
 ensamt bûwen ein vaz?
 wan bedenkestû dich baz? (Iwein 7027-32).

The Narrator's thinking is altogether wrong, vrou Minne explains, for how could love and mortal hatred conceivably stay together at one place? The final line quoted here has the connotation of an exasperated Minne asking Hartman when he will at last come to his senses and understand her powers. She then goes on to explain that a coexistence of these opposite emotions is unthinkable and that either of them would have to make room for the

other, at least in the case of "ernestlicher minnen" (7036).

In refuting vrou Minne's argument, the Narrator insists that, of course, the union of love and hatred is possible; it even is factual in the present case. The explanation lies simply in a little wall of "unkünde" which leaves the two emotions unaware of each other. He thus dissociates from Minne again by easily explaining the paradox that she found inexplicable. The parodistic element in this passage lies, however, less in the factual contents of the answer to vrou Minne than in the hyperbolic usage of the terms which vrou Minne has used earlier for her argument. The stress may be found in the new attributes:

nû wil ich iu bescheiden daz,
wie herzeminne und bitter haz
ein vil engez vaz besaz (Iwein 7041-43).

To make her point, vrou Minne has introduced the term of serious love. Therefore the Narrator's reply in such a hyperbolic form underlines the parody in this passage.

The two text passages out of Iwein that have been interpreted here demonstrate Hartmann's aloof attitude toward the courtly concept of Minne. Even if some of the typical terminology is still kept in the relation of the two lovers, the terms used have mostly lost their meaning. Talking about this phenomenon de Boor states: "Die Kernauffassung der Minne, wie sie den Artusromanen eigen ist und im Iwein dargestellt war, hatte er (Hartmann) für sich selbst längst überwunden."⁹ This critical comment may help to understand the two levels of reality given in Iwein. On the one

⁹ de Boor, II, 83.

level of the narration, Iwein is represented as the typical young man suffering from the afflictions of powerful Minne, or, likewise, vrou Minne is claimed to be responsible for Laudine's fast remarriage with her husband's murderer.¹⁰ On this level of reality, Minne is used conventionally as the typical courtly love, as it has been a part of the Arthurian legend. But it must be conceded that even here Minne is already scarcely anything else but an empty form in Hartmann, whose "function as a catechism of a true lover . . . is, of course, obviated," as Ojars Kratins sees it.¹¹ On the other level of reality, then, it becomes fully obvious how Hartmann has, indeed, overcome the conventional Minne concept. In the scenes of open Narrator intrusions, the typical Minne is merely treated as an empty cliché, and, moreover, Minne is parodied by the fictitious Narrator.

The use of parody in Erec and Iwein, as it has been found here, in addition to the numerous aspects of humor and irony, as they were discussed earlier, are undoubtedly easily appealing to the modern reader. Yet Hartmann is by no means unique or the first one in his time to make use of these devices. Three quite different instances from medieval literature will be selected to give evidence here to the fact that Hartmann stood within a tradition of literary irony, parody and satire.

The first work chosen is that by Andreas Capellanus, The Art of Courtly Love. Usually this theoretical discussion of the concept of courtly love, or Minne, has been considered the doctrine on which the

¹⁰Cf. Wapnewski, p. 67.

¹¹"Love and Marriage in Three Versions of 'The Knight of the Lion'," Comp. Lit., XVI (1964), 37.

literary representations of courtly love are based. This may be the case for most of Minnesang, but it is difficult to see both for Chrétien and for Hartmann. For in the courtly epics Erec and Iwein and their French counterparts, Minne is shown to exist between the spouses. And this, according to Capellanus, is impossible. In his chapter, "How love may come to an end," he discusses marriage as one of the factors that destroys love: "if the parties concerned marry, love is violently put to flight" ¹² This passage stands in line with the contents of the whole work about courtly love, its effects, its consequences, the persons involved and the like. The minute discussions about all possible aspects of love are then to be understood ironically. John Jay Parry, in his introduction to Capellanus' work, points out the "(caustic) satire" in this book. ¹³ Besides satiric elements, irony is prevalent throughout, and the last moral section of Capellanus' treatise does little to counteract the rest. One example only may suffice to show how irony is at work in this book. Capellanus discusses in his chapter, "The love of the clergy," how "by virtue of his sacred calling" a clergyman "ought . . . to be a stranger to every act of love" if he does not want to be deprived of his special vocation and grace. But then, without a transition, he asserts that "because of the continual idleness and the great abundance of food" the life of the clergy man is "naturally more liable to temptations of the body than that of any other men," and therefore, if he is tempted, he should go ahead and "apply himself to Love's service" as it

¹²Capellanus, The Art of Courtly Love (New York, 1941), p. 156.

¹³Capellanus, p. XIII.

was explained in other parts of the work.¹⁴ Herman J. Weigand, in Three Chapters on Courtly Love, concludes that Andreas Capellanus is not to be understood as a proponent of courtly love: "He wrote every line of this book tongue in cheek. I think we have here some remarkable early instances of . . . irony."¹⁵

An example of parody in medieval literature may, for instance, be found in Aucassin et Nicolette, according to Urban Tigner Holmes. This early 13th century "chante-fable . . . was poking fun, slyly and sometimes broadly, at the stock themes of . . . (the) more serious predecessors."¹⁶ For the purposes of this paper it is noteworthy that a piece of literature, roughly contemporary with Hartmann von Aue's courtly epics, was "intended to parody certain epic formulae and stock situations of the romance and lyric poetry."¹⁷

The last instance is taken from Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. "The Tale of Sir Thopas"¹⁸ is, according to F. N. Robinson,¹⁹ a literary satire of the metrical romance. The satire in this tale is handled in much the same way as the Narrator intrusions discussed earlier in this chapter. For the tale here is suddenly interrupted and the narrator

¹⁴ Capellanus, p. 142.

¹⁵ (Chapel Hill, 1956), p. 24.

¹⁶ A History of Old French Literature from the Origins to 1300. (New York, 1962), p. 250f.

¹⁷ Holmes, p. 147.

¹⁸ Geoffrey Chaucer, Works. Ed. F. N. Robinson. (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 164-167.

¹⁹ "Explanatory Notes," in Chaucer, Works, p. 736.

is asked to quit producing bad verse and given the alternative of telling something in prose.²⁰ Thereby the conventional form of the courtly chivalrous tales is parodied.

These examples may suffice to indicate, at least, that in making use of irony and parody in his works Hartmann stood within a literary tradition that already had some influence in the Middle Ages.

²⁰

"Sir Thopas," ll. 919ff.

V. CONCLUSION

The task of this essay has been to investigate Hartmann von Aue's Erec and Iwein as to their textual meaning. The attempt was made to avoid any notions that cannot be found expressed in the text itself, and instead to concentrate on the detailed interpretation of some passages from Hartmann's courtly epics. The texts have been selected as seemed fit for the questions asked.

The first point of interest was the image of King Arthur himself. He turned out to be an officially functioning King figure whose importance and impact does not exceed the mere representational role he plays. The Court he heads is considered the ideal world and seen in sharp contrast with the world outside. Courtly ideals, as for instance seen in the chivalrous behavior patterns, are respected by the knights who set out into the real world and the Court is used as a frame of reference for the knights' achievements. Yet this ideal courtly world is eventually outgrown both by Erec and Iwein. Their final departure from the Arthurian Court, which they give up for the sake of their own serious commitments in the real world, has been seen as an implicit criticism of the severely limited Arthurian Court. The critical view of the entire Arthurian society has been underlined by the diverse uses of irony. Irony, for the purposes of this paper, has been understood as a statement which appears serious but achieves a contrary effect. Such a statement may be given directly, as for instance when Keii is called one of the bravest knights, or indirectly through an action described (cf. Ginover's rape).

A further focal point was the study of the Arthurian Knight, mainly as represented by the two heroes Erec and Iwein. The major concern of the Arthurian Knight was identified as his search for "âventiure" in neglect of Minne. Yet his adventure-seeking is thoroughly criticized in the text--again by means of irony--as long as the knight fights his adventure for adventure's sake only in order to prove his own prowess. Both Erec and Iwein eventually outgrow this typically chivalrous ideal. Their own adventures reveal a growing awareness of others in need and their own readiness to help. In this connection the incongruity of the Arthurian ideals is often hinted at through the clashing of the courtly behavior pattern with the cruelty of the real world. A last critical insight into the Arthurian knighthood is given through the final fight in Iwein. This duel, after the hero's inner development toward maturity has been shown, represents an obvious regression for Iwein. Irony in this important fight may be seen as follows: in an Arthurian fight Iwein proves to be totally equal to his partner, the ideal Arthurian Knight Gawein; but--and this is the point--Iwein himself has fought only with part of his personality since he left his lion behind. Together with his lion--and the two cannot be split--Iwein has outgrown even the highest conceivable ideal of an Arthurian Knight.

The last chapter of this essay has dealt with another type of criticism apparent in the narrative technique of the courtly epics themselves. Some passages of Narrator intrusions that have been selected revealed a parody of the tradition of the epic narration itself and, especially, of the courtly concept of Minne. Parody, in this paper, has been understood as the use of a conventional form or term which is given a slightly twisted

and inadequate meaning. For instance, Minne is parodied as the narrator uses the typical clichés but demonstrates the shallowness of their meaning.

It has been shown then that irony and parody, often in a humorous manner, sometimes rather severely, are used as methods of implied criticism of the Arthurian world. Friedrich Neumann comes to a similar conclusion when he states: "Hartmann vermag mit feinem Humor und leichter Ironie die Welt, die er zeichnet, in der Schwebe zu halten."¹ Thus Hartmann, who was the first one to introduce the courtly epic into the Middle High German literature, already in certain ways exceeded its conventional limitations.² It must be added that the use of irony and parody in Hartmann's works is a major reason why they are attractive to the modern reader, although, as has been shown, these literary devices were not unusual in medieval literature.

It was by no means the intention of this essay to argue with the well-established understanding of Hartmann as a typical representative of the concept of "mâze". Yet the results of the study show that the work of Hartmann is, indeed, more complex than the term "mâze" would suggest. Hartmann criticism has only recently become interested in this complexity; and this essay has taken up the new interest in studying the texts of medieval works as to their actual textual meaning. Nevertheless, the

¹"Hartmann von Aue," Verfasserlexikon, V, p. 330.

²Cf. Erich Auerbach who talks about a phenomenon that may be considered a parallel to the observation above: "One feels tempted to suggest that the long functional crisis of the feudal class had already begun to make itself felt--even at the time of the flowering of courtly literature." ("The Knight Sets Forth," in Mimesis. Trans. Willard Trask. Garden City, N. Y., 1957, p. 120.)

usual approach is as legitimate as the present one taken in this essay, provided that the text of the work itself is given focal attention. And the fact that Hartmann's courtly epics yield to many different approaches may be understood as a new indication of the aesthetic richness of his work.

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